

CLASSICS CONDENSED

Vol. 1



BLEAK HOUSE, by Charles Dickens

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PAMELA, by Samuel Richardson

NIGHTMARE ABBEY, by Thomas Peacock

HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES, by Nathaniel Hawthorne

LES MISÉRABLES, by Victor Hugo

SILAS MARNER, by George Eliot

Thanks to The World's Greatest Books collection of the early 20th Century, several famous novels were condensed Reader's Digest style to give busy, or mildly-interested people the gists of the stories when they came up in conversation. By the mid-20th Century, NBC University Theater would be doing the same thing with similar classic works; some rather well, like their production of "Howards End".

Here are eight novels, some classic and some not so much, trimmed down to their bare bones for your pleasure.



Charles Dickens, 1842

Bleak House, by Charles Dickens

from The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The World's Greatest Books, Vol III*
by Arthur Mee and J.A. Hammerton, Eds.

"Bleak House," a story with a purpose, like most of Dickens's works, was published when the author was forty years old. The object of the story was to ventilate the monstrous injustice wrought by delays in the old Court of Chancery, which defeated all the purposes of a court of justice. Many of the characters, who, though famous, are not essential to the development of the story, were drawn from real life. Turveydrop was suggested by George IV., and Inspector Bucket was a friend of the author in the Metropolitan Police Force. Harold Skimpole was identified with Leigh Hunt. Dickens himself admitted the resemblance; but only in so far as none of Skimpole's vices could be attributed to his prototype. The original of Bleak House was a country mansion in Hertfordshire, near St. Albans, though it is usually said to be a summer residence of the novelist at Broadstairs.

I.--In Chancery

London. Implacable November weather. The Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Fog everywhere, and at the very heart of the fog sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery. The case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce drones on. No man alive knows what it means. It has passed into a joke. It has been death to many, but it is a joke in the profession.

Mr. Kenge (of Kenge and Carboy, solicitors, Lincoln's Inn) first mentioned Jarndyce and Jarndyce to me, and told me that the costs already amounted to from sixty to seventy thousand pounds.

My godmother, who brought me up, was just dead, and Mr. Kenge came to tell me that Mr. Jarndyce proposed, knowing my desolate position, that I should go to a first-rate school, where my education should be completed and my comfort secured. What did I say to this? What could I say but accept the proposal thankfully?

I passed at this school six happy, quiet years, and then one day came a note from Kenge and Carboy, mentioning that their client, Mr. Jarndyce, being in the house, desired my services as an eligible companion to this young lady.

So I said good-bye to the school and went to London, and was driven to Mr. Kenge's office. He was not altered, but he was surprised to see how altered I was, and appeared quite pleased.

"As you are going to be the companion of the young lady who is now in the Chancellor's private room, Miss Summerson," he said, "we thought it well that you should be in attendance also."

Mr. Kenge gave me his arm, and we went out of his office and into the court, and then into a comfortable sort of room where a young lady and a young gentleman were standing talking.

They looked up when I came in, and I saw in the young lady a beautiful girl, with rich golden hair, and a bright, innocent, trusting face.

"Miss Ada," said Mr. Kenge, "this is Miss Summerson."

She came to meet me with a smile of welcome and her hand extended, but seemed to change her mind in a moment, and kissed me.

The young gentleman was her distant cousin, she told me, and his name Richard Carstone. He was a handsome youth, and after she had called him up to where we sat, he stood by us, talking gaily, like a light-hearted boy. He was very young, not more than nineteen then, but nearly two years older than she was. They were both orphans, and had never met before that day. Our all three coming together for the first time in such an unusual place was a thing to talk about, and we talked about it.

Presently we heard a bustle, and Mr. Kenge said that the court had risen, and soon after we all followed him into the next room. There was the Lord Chancellor sitting in an armchair at the table, and his manner was both courtly and kind.

"Miss Clare," said his lordship. "Miss Ada Clare?" Mr. Kenge presented her.

"The Jarndyce in question," said the Lord Chancellor, turning over

papers, "is Jarndyce of Bleak House--a dreary name."

"But not a dreary place, my lord," said Mr. Kenge.

"Mr. Jarndyce of Bleak House is not married?" said his lordship.

"He is not, my lord," said Mr. Kenge.

"Young Mr. Richard Carstone is present?" said the Lord Chancellor.

Richard bowed and stepped forward.

"Mr. Jarndyce of Bleak House, my lord," Mr. Kenge observed, "if I may venture to remind your lordship, provides a suitable companion for----"

"For Mr. Richard Carstone!" I thought I heard his lordship say in a low voice.

"For Miss Ada Clare. This is the young lady, Miss Esther Summerson."

"Miss Summerson is not related to any party in the cause, I think."

"No, my lord."

"Very well," said his lordship, after taking Miss Ada aside and asking her if she thought she would be happy at Bleak House. "I shall make the order. Mr. Jarndyce of Bleak House has chosen, so far as I may judge, a very good companion for the young lady, and the arrangement seems the best of which the circumstances admit."

He dismissed us pleasantly and we all went out. As we stood for a minute, waiting for Mr. Kenge, a curious little old woman, Miss Flite, in a squeezed bonnet, and carrying a reticule, came curtsying and smiling up to us, with an air of great ceremony.

"Oh!" said she, "The wards in Jarndyce. Very happy, I am sure, to have the honour. It is a good omen for youth, and hope, and beauty when they find themselves in this place, and don't know what's to come of it."

"Mad!" whispered Richard, not thinking she could hear him.

"Right! Mad, young gentleman," she returned quickly. "I was a ward myself. I was not mad at that time. I had youth and hope; I believe beauty. It matters very little now. Neither of the three served, or saved me. I have the honour to attend court regularly. I expect a judgment. On the Day of Judgment. I have discovered that the sixth seal mentioned in the Revelations is the great seal. Pray accept my blessing."

Mr. Kenge coming up, the poor old lady went on. "I shall confer estates on both. Shortly. On the Day of Judgment. This is a good omen for you. Accept my blessing."

We left her at the bottom of the stairs. She was still saying, with a curtsy, and a smile between every little sentence, "Youth. And hope. And beauty. And Chancery."

The morning after, walking out early, we met the old lady again, smiling and saying in her air of patronage, "The wards in Jarndyce! Ve-ry happy, I am sure! Pray come and see my lodgings. It will be a good omen for me. Youth, and hope, and beauty, are very seldom there."

She took my hand and beckoned Richard and Ada to come too, and in a few moments she was at home.

She had stopped at a shop over which was written, "Krook, Rag and Bottle Warehouse." Inside was an old man in spectacles and a hair cap, and entering the shop the little old lady presented him to us.

"My landlord, Krook," she said. "He is called among the neighbours the Lord Chancellor. His shop is called the Court of Chancery."

She lived at the top of the house in a room from which she had a glimpse of the roof of Lincoln's Inn Hall, and this seemed to be her principal inducement for living there.

II.--Bleak House

We drove down to Bleak House, in Hertfordshire, next day, and all three of us were anxious and nervous when the night closed in, and the driver, pointing to a light sparkling on the top of a hill, cried, "That's Bleak House!"

"Ada, my love, Esther, my dear, you are welcome. Rick, if I had a hand to spare at present I would give it you!"

The gentleman who said these words in a clear, hospitable voice, kissed us both in a fatherly way, and bore us across the hall into a ruddy little room, all in a glow with a blazing fire.

"Now, Rick!" said he, "I have a hand at liberty. A word in earnest is as good as a speech. I am heartily glad to see you. You are at home. Warm yourself!"

While he spoke I glanced at his face. It was a handsome face, full of change and motion; and his hair was a silvered iron grey. I took him to

be nearer sixty than fifty, but he was upright, hearty, and robust.

So this was our coming to Bleak House.

The very next morning I was installed as housekeeper and presented with two bunches of keys--a large bunch for the housekeeping and a little bunch for the cellars. I could not help trembling when I met Mr. Jarndyce, for I knew it was he who had done everything for me since my godmother's death.

"Nonsense!" he said. "I hear of a good little orphan girl without a protector, and I take it into my head to be that protector. She grows up, and more than justifies my good opinion, and I remain her guardian and her friend. What is there in all this?"

He soon began to talk to me confidentially as if I had been in the habit of conversing with him every morning for I don't know how long.

"Of course, Esther," he said, "you don't understand this Chancery business?"

I shook my head.

"I don't know who does," he returned. "The lawyers have twisted it into such a state of bedevilment that the original merits of the case have long disappeared. Its about a will, and the trusts under a will--or it was once. It's about nothing but costs now. It was about a will when it was about anything. A certain Jarndyce, in an evil hour, made a great fortune and made a great will. In the question how the trusts under that will are to be administered, the fortune left by the will is squandered away; the legatees under the will are reduced to such a miserable condition that they would be sufficiently punished if they had committed an enormous crime in having money left them, and the will itself is made a dead letter. All through the deplorable cause everybody must have copies, over and over again, of everything that has accumulated about it in the way of cartloads of papers, and must go down the middle and up again, through such an infernal country-dance of costs and fees and nonsense and corruption as was never dreamed of in the wildest visions of a witch's sabbath. And we can't get out of the suit on any terms, for we are made parties to it, and _must be_ parties to it, whether we like it or not. But it won't do to think of it! Thinking of it drove my great-uncle, poor Tom Jarndyce, to blow his brains out."

"I hope sir--" said I.

"I think you had better call me Guardian, my dear."

"I hope, Guardian," said I, giving the housekeeping keys the least shake in the world, "that you may not be trusting too much to my discretion. I

am not clever, and that's the truth."

"You are clever enough to be the good little woman of our lives here, my dear," he returned playfully; "the little old woman of the rhyme, who sweeps the cobwebs of the sky, and you will sweep them out of our sky in the course of your housekeeping, Esther."

This was the beginning of my being called Old Woman, and Mother Hubbard, and Dame Durden, and so many names of that sort, that my own soon became quite lost.

One of the things I noticed from the first about my guardian was that, though he was always doing a thousand acts of kindness, he could not bear any acknowledgments.

We had somehow got to see more of Miss Flite on our visits to London: for the Lord Chancellor always had to be consulted before Richard could settle in any profession, and as Richard first wanted to be a doctor and then tired of that in favour of the army, there were several consultations. I remember one visit because it was the first time we met Mr. Woodcourt.

My guardian and Ada and I heard of Miss Flite having been ill, and when we called we found a medical gentleman attending her in her garret in Lincoln's Inn.

Miss Flite dropped a general curtsy.

"Honoured, indeed," she said, "by another visit from the wards in Jarndyce! Very happy to receive Jarndyce of Bleak House beneath my humble roof!"

"Has she been very ill?" asked Mr. Jarndyce in a whisper of the doctor.

"Oh, decidedly unwell!" she answered confidentially. "Not pain, you know--trouble. Only Mr. Woodcourt knows how much. My physician, Mr. Woodcourt"--with great stateliness--"The wards in Jarndyce; Jarndyce of Bleak House. The kindest physician in the college," she whispered to me. "I expect a judgment. On the Day of Judgment. And shall then confer estates."

"She will be as well, in a day or two," said Mr. Woodcourt, with an observant smile, "as she ever will be. Have you heard of her good fortune?"

"Most extraordinary!" said Miss Flite. "Every Saturday Kenge and Carboy place a paper of shillings in my hand. Always the same number. One for every day in the week. I think that the Lord Chancellor forwards them. Until the judgment I expect is given."

My guardian was contemplating Miss Flite's birds, and I had no need to look beyond him.

III.--I Am Made Happy_

I sometimes thought that Mr. Woodcourt loved me, and that, if he had been richer, he would perhaps have told me that he loved me before he went away. I had thought sometimes that if he had done so I should have been glad. As it was, he went to the East Indies, and later we read in the papers of a great shipwreck, that Allan Woodcourt had worked like a hero to save the drowning, and succour the survivors.

I had been ill when my dear guardian asked me one day if I would care to read something he had written, and I said "Yes." There was estrangement at that time between Richard and Mr. Jarndyce, for the unhappy boy had taken it into his head that the case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce would yet be settled, and would bring him fortune, and this kept him from devoting himself seriously to any profession. Of course, he and my darling Ada had fallen in love, and my guardian insisting on their waiting till Richard was earning some income before any engagement could be recognised, increased the estrangement. I knew, to my distress, that Richard suspected my guardian of having a conflicting claim in the horrible lawsuit and this made him think unjustly of Mr. Jarndyce.

I read the letter. It was so impressive in its love for me, and in the unselfish caution it gave me, that my eyes were too often blinded to read much at a time. But I read it through three times before I laid it down. It asked me would I be the mistress of Bleak House. It was not a love-letter, though it expressed so much love, but was written just as he would at any time have spoken to me.

I felt that to devote my life to his happiness was to thank him poorly for all he had done for me. Still I cried very much; not only in the fulness of my heart after reading the letter, but as if something for which there was no name or distinct idea were lost to me. I was very happy, very thankful, very hopeful, but I cried very much.

On entering the breakfast-room next morning I found my guardian just as usual; quite as frank, as open, as free. I thought he might speak to me about the letter, but he never did.

At the end of a week I went to him and said, rather hesitating and trembling, "Guardian, when would you like to have the answer to the letter?"

"When it's ready, my dear," he replied.

"I think it's ready," said I, "and I have brought it myself."

I put my two arms around his neck and kissed him, and he said was this the mistress of Bleak House? And I said "Yes," and it made no difference presently, and I said nothing to my pet, Ada, about it.

It was a few days after this, when Mr. Vholes, the attorney whom Richard employed to watch his interests, called at Bleak House, and told us that his client was very embarrassed financially, and so thought of throwing up his commission in the army.

To avert this I went down to Deal and found Richard alone in the barracks. He was writing at a table, with a great confusion of clothes, tin cases, books, boots, and brushes strewn all about the floor. So worn and haggard he looked, even in the fulness of his handsome youth!

My mission was quite fruitless.

"No, Dame Durden! Two subjects I forbid. The first is John Jarndyce. The second, you know what. Call it madness, and I tell you I can't help it now, and can't be sane. But it is no such thing; it is the one object I have to pursue."

He went on to tell me that it was impossible to remain a soldier; that, apart from debts and duns, he took no interest in his employment and was not fit for it. He showed me papers to prove that his retirement was arranged. Knowing I had done no good by coming down, I prepared to return to London on the morrow.

There was some excitement in the town by reason of the arrival of a big Indiaman, and, as it happened, amongst those who came on shore from the ship was Mr. Allan Woodcourt. I met him in the hotel where I was staying, and he seemed quite pleased to see me. He was glad to meet Richard again, too, and promised, on my asking him, to befriend Richard in London.

IV.--End of Jarndyce and Jarndyce

Richard always declared that it was Ada he meant to see righted, no less than himself, and his anxiety on that point so impressed Mr. Woodcourt that he told me about it. It revived a fear I had had before, that my dear girl's little property might be absorbed by Mr. Vholes, and that Richard's justification to himself would be this.

So I went up to London to see Richard, who now lived in Symond's Inn, and my darling Ada went with me. He was poring over a table covered with

dusty papers, but he received us very affectionately.

I noticed, as he passed his two hands over his head, how sunken and how large his eyes appeared, and how dry his lips were. He spoke of the case half-hopefully, half-despondently, "Either the suit must be ended, Esther, or the suitor. But it shall be the suit--the suit." Then he took a few turns up and down, and sank upon the sofa. "I get so tired," he said gloomily. "It is such weary, weary work."

"Esther, dear," Ada said, very quietly, "I am not going home again. Never any more. I am going to stay with my dear husband. We have been married above two months. Go home without me, my own Esther; I shall never go home any more."

I often came to Richard and his wife, and I often met Mr. Woodcourt there. Richard still suspected my guardian, and refused to see him, and when I said this was so unreasonable, my guardian only said, "What shall we find reasonable in Jarndyce and Jarndyce? Unreason and injustice from beginning to end, if it ever has an end. How should poor Rick, always hovering near it, pluck reason out of it?"

It was some months after this when Mr. Woodcourt asked me to be his wife, and I had to tell him I was not free. But I had to tell him that I could never forget how proud and glad I was at having been beloved by him.

He took my hand and kissed it, and was like himself again.

All this time my guardian had never referred to his letter or my answer, so I said to him next morning I would be the mistress of Bleak House whenever he pleased.

"Next month?" my guardian said gaily.

"Next month, dear guardian."

At the end of the month my guardian went away to Yorkshire, and asked me to follow him. I was very much surprised, and when the journey was over my guardian explained that he had asked me to come down to see a house he had bought for Mr. Woodcourt, with whom he was always very pleased.

It was a beautiful summer morning when we went out to look at the house, and there over the porch was written. "Bleak House." He led me to a seat, and sitting down beside me, said:

"When I wrote you the letter to which you brought the answer"--my guardian smiled as he referred to it--"I had my own happiness too much in view; but I had yours, too. Hear me, my love, but do not speak. When Woodcourt came home, I saw that there was other happiness for you; I saw

with whom you would be happier. Well, I have long been in Allan Woodcourt's confidence, although he was not, until yesterday, in mine. One more last word. When Allan Woodcourt spoke to you, my dear, he spoke with my knowledge and consent. But I gave him no encouragement; not I, for these surprises were my great reward, and I was too miserly to part with a scrap of it. He was to come and tell me all that passed, and he did. I have no more to say. This is Bleak House. This day I give this house its little mistress, and before God it is the brightest day in all my life."

He rose, and raised me with him. We were no longer alone. My husband--I have called him by that name full seven happy years now--stood at my side.

"Allan," said my guardian, "take from me the best wife that ever man had. What more can I say for you than that I know you deserve her?"

He kissed me once again. And now the tears were in his eyes as he said, more softly, "Esther, my dearest, after so many years, there is a kind of parting in this too. I know that my mistake has caused you some distress. Forgive your old guardian in restoring him to his old place in your affections. Allan, take my dear."

We all three went home together next day. We had an intimation from Mr. Kenge that the case would come on at Westminster in two days, and that a certain will had been found which might end the suit in Richard's favour.

Allan took me down to Westminster, and when we came to Westminster Hall we found that the Court of Chancery was full, and that something unusual had occurred. We asked a gentleman by us if he knew what case was on. He told us Jarndyce and Jarndyce, and that, as well as he could make out, it was over. Over for the day? "No," he said; "over for good."

In a few minutes a crowd came streaming out, and we saw Mr. Kenge. He told us that Jarndyce and Jarndyce was a monument of Chancery practice, and--in a good many words--that the case was over because the whole estate was found to have been absorbed in costs.

We hurried away, first to my guardian, and then to Ada and Richard.

Richard was lying on the sofa with his eyes closed when I went in. When he opened them, I fully saw, for the first time, how worn he was. But he spoke cheerfully, and said how glad he was to think of our intended marriage.

In the evening my guardian came in and laid his hand softly on Richard's.

"Oh, sir," said Richard, "you are a good man, a good man!" and burst into tears.

My guardian sat down beside him, keeping his hand on Richard's.

"My dear Rick," he said, "the clouds have cleared away, and it is bright now. We can see now. And how are you, my dear boy?"

"I am very weak, sir, but I hope I shall be stronger. I have to begin the world."

He sought to raise himself a little.

"Ada, my darling!" Allan raised him, so that she could hold him on her bosom. "I have done you many wrongs, my own. I have married you to poverty and trouble, I have scattered your means to the winds. You will forgive me all this, my Ada, before I begin the world?"

A smile lit up his face as she bent to kiss him. He slowly laid his face upon her bosom, drew his arms closer round her neck, and with one parting sob began the world. Not this--oh, not this! The world that sets this right.

* * * * *



Henry Fielding, 1740's

Tom Jones, by Henry Fielding

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"The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling," described in the dedication as the "labour of some years of my life," appeared in six volumes, on February 28, 1749, a short time after Fielding's appointment as justice of peace for Westminster. Though its broad humour and coarseness of expression are

perhaps hard to bear in these times, it is by common consent Fielding's masterpiece, and by way of being one of the greatest novels in the language. For experience of life, observation of character, and sheer humanity, it is certainly an outstanding specimen of the English novel and manners. Like others of his books, "Tom Jones" was written during a period of great mental strain. Ever haunted by poverty, Fielding acknowledges his debt to his old schoolfellow Lyttelton, to whom he owed his "existence during the composition of the book." The story was popular from the first.

I.--Mr. Allworthy Makes a Discovery

In that part of the country which is commonly called Somersetshire there lately lived a gentleman whose name was Allworthy, and who might well be called the favourite of both nature and fortune. From the former of these he derived an agreeable person, a sound constitution, a solid understanding, and a benevolent heart; by the latter he was decreed to the inheritance of one of the largest estates in the country.

Mr. Allworthy lived, for the most part, retired in the country, with one sister, for whom he had a very tender affection. This lady, Miss Bridget Allworthy, now somewhat past the age of thirty, was of that species of women whom you commend rather for good qualities than beauty.

Mr. Allworthy had been absent a full quarter of a year in London on some very particular business, and having returned to his house very late in the evening, retired, much fatigued, to his chamber. Here, after he had spent some minutes on his knees--a custom which he never broke through on any account--he was preparing to step into bed, when, upon opening the clothes, to his great surprise, he beheld an infant wrapped up in some coarse linen, in a sweet and profound sleep, between his sheets. He stood for some time lost in astonishment at this sight; but soon began to be touched with sentiments of compassion for the little wretch before him. He then rang his bell, and ordered an elderly woman-servant to rise immediately and come to him.

The consternation of Mrs. Deborah Wilkins at the finding of the little infant was rather greater than her master's had been; nor could she refrain from crying out, with great horror, "My good sir, what's to be done?"

Mr. Allworthy answered she must take care of the child that evening, and in the morning he would give orders to provide it a nurse.

"Yes, sir," says she, "and I hope your worship will send out your warrant to take up the hussy its mother. Indeed, such wicked sluts

cannot be too severely punished for laying their sins at honest men's doors; and though your worship knows your own innocence, yet the world is censorious, and if your worship should provide for the child it may make the people after to believe. If I might be so bold as to give my advice, I would have it put in a basket, and sent out and laid at the churchwarden's door. It is a good night, only a little rainy and windy, and if it was well wrapped up and put in a warm basket, it is two to one but it lives till it is found in the morning. But if it should not, we have discharged our duty in taking care of it; and it is, perhaps, better for such creatures to die in a state of innocence than to grow up and imitate their mothers."

But Mr. Allworthy had now got one of his fingers into the infant's hand, which, by its gentle pressure, seeming to implore his assistance, certainly outpleaded the eloquence of Mrs. Deborah. Mr. Allworthy gave positive orders for the child to be taken away and provided with pap and other things against it waked. He likewise ordered that proper clothes should be procured for it early in the morning, and that it should be brought to himself as soon as he was stirring.

Such was the respect Mrs. Wilkins bore her master, under whom she enjoyed a most excellent place, that her scruples gave way to his peremptory commands, and, declaring the child was a sweet little infant, she walked off with it to her own chamber.

Allworthy betook himself to those pleasing slumbers which a heart that hungers after goodness is apt to enjoy when thoroughly satisfied.

In the morning Mr. Allworthy told his sister he had a present for her, and, when Mrs. Wilkins produced the little infant, told her the whole story of its appearance.

Miss Bridget took the good-natured side of the question, intimated some compassion for the helpless little creature, and commended her brother's charity in what he had done. The good lady subsequently gave orders for providing all necessaries for the child, and her orders were indeed so liberal that had it been a child of her own she could not have exceeded them.

II.--The Foundling Achieves Manhood

Miss Bridget having been asked in marriage by one Captain Blifil, a half-pay officer, and the nuptials duly celebrated, Mrs. Blifil was in course of time delivered of a fine boy.

Though the birth of an heir to his beloved sister was a circumstance of great joy to Mr. Allworthy, yet it did not alienate his affections from

the little foundling to whom he had been godfather, and had given his own name of Thomas; the surname of Jones being added because it was believed that was the mother's name.

He told his sister, if she pleased, the newborn infant should be bred up together with little Tommy, to which she consented, for she had truly a great complaisance for her brother.

The captain, however, could not so easily bring himself to bear what he condemned as a fault in Mr. Allworthy; for his meditations being chiefly employed on Mr. Allworthy's fortune, and on his hopes of succession, he looked on all the instances of his brother-in-law's generosity as diminutions of his own wealth.

But one day, while the captain was exulting in the happiness which would accrue to him by Mr. Allworthy's death, he himself died of apoplexy.

So the two boys grew up together under the care of Mr. Allworthy and Mrs. Blifil, and by the time he was fourteen Tom Jones--who, according to universal opinion, was certainly born to be hanged--had been already convicted of three robberies--viz., of robbing an orchard, of stealing a duck out of a farmer's yard, and of picking Master Blifil's pocket of a ball.

The vices of this young man were, moreover, heightened by the disadvantageous light in which they appeared when opposed to the virtues of Master Blifil, his companion. He was, indeed, a lad of remarkable disposition--sober, discreet, and pious beyond his age; and many expressed their wonder that Mr. Allworthy should suffer such a lad as Tom Jones to be educated with his nephew lest the morals of the latter should be corrupted by his example.

To say the truth, the whole duck, and great part of the apples, were converted to the use of Tom's friend, the gamekeeper, and his family; though, as Jones alone was discovered, the poor lad bore not only the whole smart, but the whole blame.

Mr. Allworthy had committed the instruction of the two boys to a learned divine, the Reverend Mr. Thwackum, who resided in the house; but though Mr. Allworthy had given him frequent orders to make no difference between the lads, yet was Thwackum altogether as kind and gentle to Master Blifil as he was harsh, nay, even barbarous, to the other. In truth, Blifil had greatly gained his master's affections; partly by the profound respect he always showed his person, but much more by the decent reverence with which he received his doctrine, for he had got by heart, and frequently repeated, his phrases, and maintained all his master's religious principles, with a zeal which was surprising in one so young.

Tom Jones, on the other hand, was not only deficient in outward tokens of respect, often forgetting to pull off his cap at his master's approach, but was altogether unmindful both of his master's precepts and example.

At the age of twenty, however, Tom, for his love of hunting, had become a great favourite with Mr. Allworthy's neighbour, Squire Western; and Sophia, Mr. Western's only child, lost her heart irretrievably to him before she suspected it was in danger. On his side, Tom was truly sensible of the great worth of Sophia. He liked her person extremely, no less admired her accomplishments, and tenderly loved her goodness. In reality, as he had never once entertained any thoughts of possessing her, nor had ever given the least voluntary indulgence to his inclinations, he had a much stronger passion for her than he himself was acquainted with.

An accident occurred on the hunting-field in saving Sophia from her too mettlesome horse kept Jones a prisoner for some time in Mr. Western's house, and during those weeks he not only found that he loved Sophia with an unbounded passion, but he plainly saw the tender sentiments she had for him; yet could not this assurance lessen his despair of obtaining the consent of her father, nor the horrors which attended his pursuit of her by any base or treacherous method.

Hence, at the approach of the young lady, he grew pale; and, if this was sudden, started. If his eyes accidentally met hers, the blood rushed into his cheeks, and his countenance became all over scarlet. If he touched her, his hand, nay, his whole frame, trembled.

All these symptoms escaped the notice of the squire, but not so of Sophia. She soon perceived these agitations of mind in Jones, and was at no loss to discover the cause; for, indeed, she recognised it in her own breast. In a word, she was in love with him to distraction. It was not long before Jones was able to attend her to the harpsichord, where she would kindly condescend for hours together to charm him with the most delicious music.

The news that Mr. Allworthy was dangerously ill (for a servant had brought word that he was dying) broke off Tom's stay at Mr. Western's, and drove all the thoughts of love out of his head. He hurried instantly into the chariot which was sent for him, and ordered the coachman to drive with all imaginable haste; nor did the idea of Sophia once occur to him on the way.

III.--Tom Jones Falls into Disgrace

On the night when the physician announced that Mr. Allworthy was out of

danger Jones was thrown into such immoderate excess of rapture by the news that he might be truly said to be drunk with joy--an intoxication which greatly forwards the effects of wine; and as he was very free, too, with the bottle, on this occasion he became very soon literally drunk.

Jones had naturally violent animal spirits, and Thwackum, resenting his speeches, only the doctor's interposition prevented wrath kindling. After which, Jones gave loose to mirth, sang two or three amorous songs, and fell into every frantic disorder which unbridled joy is apt to inspire; but so far was he from any disposition to quarrel that he was ten times better-humoured, if possible, than when he was sober.

Blifil, whose mother had died during her brother's illness, was highly offended at a behaviour which was so inconsistent with the sober and prudent reserve of his own temper. The recent death of his mother, he declared, made such conduct very indecent.

"It would become them better," he said, "to express the exultations of their hearts at Mr. Allworthy's recovery in thanksgiving, than in drunkenness and riot."

Wine had not so totally overpowered Jones as to prevent him recollecting Blifil's loss the moment it was mentioned. He at once offered to shake Mr. Blifil by the hand, and begged his pardon, saying his excessive joy for Mr. Allworthy's recovery had driven every other thought out of his mind.

Blifil scornfully rejected his hand, and with an insulting illusion to the misfortune of Jones's birth provoked the latter to blows. The scuffle which ensued might have produced mischief had it not been for the interference of Thwackum and the physician.

Blifil, however, only waited for an opportunity to be revenged on Jones, and the occasion was soon forthcoming when Mr. Allworthy was fully recovered from his illness.

Mr. Western had found out that his daughter was in love with Tom Jones, and at once decided that she should marry Blifil, to whom Sophia professed great abhorrence.

As for Blifil, the success of Jones was much more grievous to him than the loss of Sophia, whose estate, indeed, was dearer to him than her person.

Mr. Western swore that his daughter shouldn't have a ha'penny, nor the twentieth part of a brass farthing, if she married Jones; and Blifil, with many sighs, professed to his uncle that he could not bear the thought of Sophia being ruined by her preference for Jones.

"This lady, I am sure, will be undone in every sense; for, besides the loss of most part of her own fortune, she will be married to a beggar. Nay, that is a trifle; for I know him to be one of the worst men in the world."

"How?" said Mr. Allworthy. "I command you to tell me what you mean."

"You know, sir," said Blifil, "I never disobeyed you. In the very day of your utmost danger, when myself and all the family were in tears, he filled the house with riot and debauchery. He drank, and sang, and roared; and when I gave him a gentle hint of the indecency of his actions, he fell into a violent passion, swore many oaths, called me rascal, and struck me. I am sure I have forgiven him that long ago. I wish I could so easily forget his ingratitude to the best of benefactors."

Thwackum was now sent for, and corroborated every circumstance which the other had deposed.

Poor Jones was too full of grief at the thought that Western had discovered the whole affair between him and Sophia to make any adequate defence. He could not deny the charge of drunkenness, and out of modesty sunk everything that related particularly to himself.

Mr. Allworthy answered that he was now resolved to banish him from his sight for ever. "Your audacious attempt to steal away a young lady calls upon me to justify my own character in punishing you. And there is no part of your character which I resent more than your ill-treatment of that good young man (meaning Blifil), who hath behaved with so much tenderness and honour towards you."

A flood of tears now gushed from the eyes of Jones, and every faculty of speech and motion seemed to have deserted him. It was some time before he was able to obey Allworthy's peremptory commands of departing, which he at length did, having first kissed his hands with a passion difficult to be affected, and as difficult to be described.

Mr. Allworthy, however, did not permit him to leave the house penniless, but presented him with a note for £500. He then commanded him to go immediately, and told Jones that his clothes, and everything else, should be sent to him whithersoever he should order them.

Jones had hardly set out, which he did with feelings of agony and despair, before Sophia Western decided that only in flight could she be saved from marriage with the detested Blifil.

Mr. Western, in spite of tremendous love for his daughter, thought her inclinations of as little consequence as Blifil himself conceived them

to be; and Mr. Allworthy, who said "he would on no account be accessory to forcing a young lady into a marriage contrary to her own will," was satisfied by his nephew's disingenuous statement that the young lady's behaviour to him was full as forward as he wished it.

Sophia, having appointed her maid to meet her at a certain place not far from the house, exactly at the ghostly and dreadful hour of twelve, began to prepare for her own departure.

But first she was obliged to give a painful audience to her father, and he treated her in so violent and outrageous a manner that he frightened her into an affected compliance with his will, which so highly pleased the good squire that he at once changed his frowns into smiles, and his menaces into promises.

He vowed his whole soul was wrapped in hers, that her consent had made him the happiest of mankind.

He then gave her a large bank-bill to dispose of in any trinkets she pleased, and kissed and embraced her in the fondest manner.

Sophia revered her father piously and loved him passionately, but the thoughts of her beloved Jones quickly destroyed all the regretful promptings of filial love.

IV.--Tom Jones's Restoration

After many adventures on the road Mr. Jones reached London; and as he had often heard Mr. Allworthy mention the gentlewoman at whose house in Bond Street he used to lodge when he was in town, he sought the house, and was soon provided with a room there on the second floor. Mrs. Miller, the person who let these lodgings, was the widow of a clergyman, and Mr. Allworthy had settled an annuity of £50 a year on her, "in consideration of always having her first floor when he was in town."

Tom Jones's fortunes were now very soon at the lowest. Having been forced into a quarrel in the streets with an acquaintance named Fitzpatrick, and having wounded him with his sword, a number of fellows rushed in and carried Jones off to the civil magistrate, who, being informed that the wound appeared to be mortal, straightway committed the prisoner to the Gatehouse.

Sophia Western was also in London at the house of her aunt; and soon afterwards Mr. Western, Mr. Allworthy, and Blifil all reached the city.

It was just at this time that Mr. Allworthy, consenting to his nephew once more offering himself to Sophia, came with Blifil to his accustomed

lodgings in Bond Street. Mrs. Miller, to whom Jones had showed many kindnesses, at once put in a good word for the unfortunate young man; and, on Blifil exulting over the manslaughter Jones was alleged to have committed, declared that the wounded man, whoever he was, was in fault. This, indeed, was shortly afterwards corroborated by Fitzpatrick himself, who acknowledged his mistake.

But it was not till Mr. Allworthy discovered that Blifil had been arranging with a lawyer to get the men who had arrested Jones to bear false witness, and learnt further that Tom Jones was his sister Bridget's child, and that on her death-bed Mrs. Blifil's message to her brother confessing the fact had been suppressed by her son, that his old feelings of affection for Tom Jones returned. Before setting out to visit Jones in the prison Mr. Allworthy called on Sophia to inform her that he regretted Blifil had ever been encouraged to give her annoyance, and that Mr. Jones was his nephew and his heir.

Men over-violent in their dispositions are, for the most part, as changeable in them. No sooner was Western informed of Mr. Allworthy's intention to make Jones his heir than he joined heartily with the uncle in every commendation of the nephew, and became as eager for his daughter's marriage with Jones as he had before been to couple her to Blifil.

Fitzpatrick being recovered of his wound, and admitting the aggression, Jones was released from custody and returned to his lodgings to meet Mr. Allworthy.

It is impossible to conceive a more tender or moving scene than this meeting between the uncle and nephew. Allworthy received Jones into his arms. "O my child!" he cried, "how have I been to blame! How have I injured you! What amends can I ever make you for those unkind suspicions which I have entertained, and for all the sufferings they have occasioned you?"

"Am I not now made amends?" cried Jones. "Would not my sufferings, had they been ten times greater, have been now richly repaid?"

Here the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Western, who could no longer be kept away even by the authority of Allworthy himself. Western immediately went up to Jones, crying out, "My old friend Tom, I am glad to see thee, with all my heart. All past must be forgotten. Come along with me; I'll carry thee to thy mistress this moment."

Here Allworthy interposed; and the squire was obliged to consent to delay introducing Jones to Sophia till the afternoon.

Blifil, now thoroughly exposed in his treachery, was at first sullen and silent, balancing in his mind whether he should yet deny all; but

finding at last the evidence too strong against him, betook himself to confession, and was now as remarkably mean as he had been before remarkably wicked. Mr. Allworthy subsequently settled £200 a year upon him, to which Jones hath privately added a third. Upon this income Blifil lives in one of the northern counties. He is also lately turned Methodist, in hopes of marrying a very rich widow of that sect. Sophia would not at first permit any promise of an immediate engagement with Jones because of certain stories of his inconstancy, but Mr. Western refused to hear of any delay.

"To-morrow or next day?" says Western, bursting into the room where Sophia and Jones were alone.

"Indeed, sir," says she, "I have no such intention."

"But I can tell thee," replied he, "why hast not; only because thou dost love to be disobedient, and to plague and vex thy father. When I forbid her, then it was all nothing but sighing and whining, and languishing and writing; now I am for thee--(this to Jones)--she is against thee. All the spirit of contrary, that's all. She is above being guided and governed by her father, that is the whole truth on't. It is only to disoblige and contradict me."

"What would my papa have me do?" cries Sophia.

"What would I ha' thee do?" says he, "why gee un thy hand this moment."

"Well, sir," said Sophia, "I will obey you. There is my hand, Mr. Jones."

"Well, and will you consent to ha' un to-morrow morning?" says Western.

"I will be obedient to you, sir," cries she.

"Why, then, to-morrow morning be the day," cries he.

"Why, then, to-morrow morning shall be the day, papa, since you will have it so," said Sophia. Jones then fell upon his knees and kissed her hand in an agony of joy, while Western began to caper and dance about the room, presently crying out, "Where the devil is Allworthy?" He then sallied out in quest of him, and very opportunely left the lovers to enjoy a few tender minutes alone.

But he soon returned with Allworthy, saying, "If you won't believe me, you may ask her yourself. Hast not gin thy consent, Sophy, to be married to-morrow?"

"Such are your commands, sir," cries Sophia, "and I dare not be guilty of disobedience."

"I hope there is not the least constraint," cries Allworthy.

"Why, there," cried Western, "you may bid her unsay all again if you will. Dost repent heartily of thy promise, dost not, Sophy?"

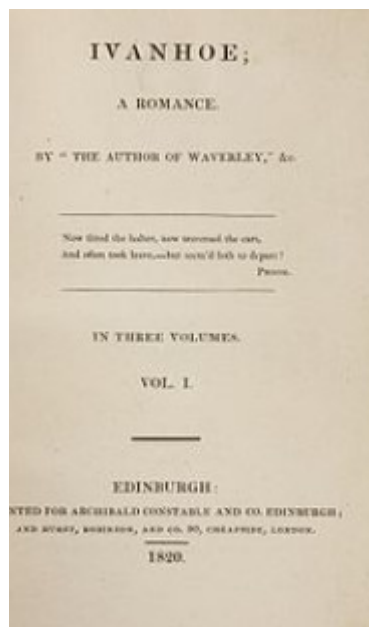
"Indeed, papa," cried she. "I do not repent, nor do I believe I ever shall, of any promise in favour of Mr. Jones."

"Then, nephew," cries Allworthy, "I felicitate you most heartily, for I think you are the happiest of men."

Mr. Allworthy, Mr. Western, and Mrs. Miller were the only persons present at the wedding, and within two days of that event Mr. Jones and Sophia attended Mr. Western and Mr. Allworthy into the country.

There is not a neighbour or a servant, who doth not most gratefully bless the day when Mr. Jones was married to Sophia.

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Ivanhoe, 1st Ed. 1820

Ivanhoe, by Sir Walter Scott

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"Ivanhoe," in common with "The Legend of Montrose" and "The Bride of Lammermoor," was written, or rather dictated to

amanuenses, during a period of great physical suffering; "through fits of suffering," says one of Scott's biographers, "so great that he could not suppress cries of agony." "Ivanhoe" made its appearance towards the end of 1819. Although the book lacks much of that vivid portraiture that distinguishes Scott's other novels, the intense vigour of the narrative, and the striking presentation of mediaeval life, more than atone for the former lapse. From the first, "Ivanhoe" has been singularly successful, and it is, and has been, more popular among English readers than any of the so-called "Scottish novels." According to Sir Leslie Stephen, it was Scott's culminating success in the book-selling sense.

I.--The Hall of Cedric the Saxon

In the hall of Rotherwood at the centre of the upper table sat Cedric the Saxon, irritable at the delay of his evening meal, and impatient for the presence of his favourite clown Wamba, and the return of his swineherd Gurth. "They have been carried off to serve the Norman lords," he exclaimed. "But I will be avenged. Haply they think me old, but they shall find the blood of Hereward is in the veins of Cedric. Ah, Wilfred, Wilfred!" he went on in a lower tone, "couldst thou have ruled thine unreasonable passion, thy father had not been left in his age like the solitary oak that throws out its shattered branches against the full sweep of the tempest!"

From his melancholy reflections, Cedric was suddenly awakened by the blast of a horn.

"To the gate, knaves!" said the Saxon, hastily. "See what tidings that horn tells us of."

Returning in less than three minutes, a warder announced "that the Prior Aymer of Jorvank, and the good knight Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Commander of the Order of Knights Templars, with a small retinue, requested hospitality and lodging for the night, being on their way to a tournament to be held not far from Ashby-de-la-Zouche."

"Normans both," muttered Cedric; "but, Norman or Saxon, the hospitality of Rotherwood must not be impeached; they are welcome since they have chosen to halt; in the quality of guests, even Normans must suppress their insolence."

The folding doors at the bottom of the hall were cast wide, and preceded by the major domo with his wand, and four domestics bearing blazing torches, the guests of the evening entered the apartment, followed by their attendants, and, at a more humble distance, by a pilgrim, wearing

the sandals and broad hat of the palmer.

No sooner were the guests seated, and the repast about to commence, than the major domo, or steward, suddenly raising his wand, said aloud--"Forbear!--Place for the Lady Rowena." A side door at the upper end of the hall now opened, and Cedric's ward, Rowena, a Saxon lady of rare beauty and lofty character, entered. All stood up to receive her, and, as she moved gracefully forward to assume her place at the board, the Knight Templar's eyes bent on her with an ardour that made Rowena draw with dignity the veil around her face.

Cedric and the Prior discoursed on hunting for a time, the Lady Rowena seemed engaged in conversation with one of her attendants; while the haughty Templar's eye wandered from the Saxon beauty to the rest of the company.

"Pledge me in a cup of wine, Sir Templar," said Cedric, "and fill another to the Abbot. To the strong in arms, Sir Templar, be their race or language what it will, who now bear them best in Palestine among the champions of the Cross!"

"To whom, besides the sworn champions of the Holy Sepulchre, whose badge I wear, can the palm be assigned among the champions of the Cross?" said Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert.

"Were there, then, none in the English army," said the Lady Rowena, "whose names are worthy to be mentioned with the Knights of the Temple?"

"Forgive me, lady," replied de Bois-Guilbert, "the English monarch did, indeed, bring to Palestine a host of gallant warriors, second only to those whose breasts have been the bulwark of that blessed land."

"Second to NONE," said the Pilgrim, and all turned towards the spot from whence the declaration came. "I say that the English chivalry were second to none who ever drew sword in defence of the Holy Land. I saw it when King Richard himself and five of his knights held a tournament after the taking of Sir John-de-Acre, as challengers against all comers. On that day each knight ran three courses, and cast to the ground three antagonists. Seven of these assailants were Knights of the Temple--and Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert well knows the truth of what I tell you."

A bitter smile of rage darkened the countenance of the Templar. At Cedric's request the Pilgrim told out the names of the English knights, only pausing at the sixth to say--"he was a young knight--his name dwells not in my memory."

"Sir Palmer," said the Templar, scornfully, "I will myself tell the name of the knight before whose lance fortune and my horse's fault occasioned my falling--it was the Knight of Ivanhoe; nor was there one of the six

that for his years had more renown in arms. Yet this I will say, and loudly--that were he in England, and durst repeat, in this week's tournament, the challenge of St. John-de-Acre, I, mounted and armed as I now am, would give him every advantage of weapons and abide the result."

"Your challenge would be soon answered," replied the Palmer, "were your antagonist near you. If Ivanhoe ever returns from Palestine, I will be his surety that he meet you. And for pledge I proffer this reliquary," taking a small ivory box from his bosom, "containing a portion of the true cross, brought from the Monastery of Mount Carmel."

The Templar took from his neck a gold chain, which he flung on the board, saying, "Let Prior Aymer hold my pledge, and that of this nameless vagrant, in token that when the Knight of Ivanhoe comes within the four seas of Britain, he underlies the challenge of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, which, if he answers not, I will proclaim him as a coward on the walls of every Temple Court in Europe."

"It will not need," said the Lady Rowena, breaking silence; "my voice shall be heard, if no other in this hall is raised on behalf of the absent Ivanhoe. I affirm he will meet fairly every honourable challenge, and I would pledge name and fame that Ivanhoe gives this proud knight the meeting he desires."

"Lady," said Cedric, "this beseems not; were further pledge necessary, I myself, justly offended as I am, would yet gage my honour for the honour of Ivanhoe."

The grace-cup was shortly after served round, and the guests marshalled to their sleeping apartment.

II.--The Disinherited Knight

The Passage of Arms, as it was called, which was to take place at Ashby, attracted universal attention, as champions of the first renown were to take the field in the presence of Prince John himself.

The laws of the tournament, proclaimed by the heralds, were briefly:

First, the five challengers were to undertake all comers.

Secondly, the general tournament in which all knights present might take part; and being divided into two bands of equal numbers, might fight it out manfully, until the signal was given by Prince John to cease the combat.

The challengers, headed by Brian de Bois-Guilbert, were all Normans, and

Cedric saw, with keen feeling of dissatisfaction, the advantage they gained. No less than four parties of knights had gone down before the challengers, and Prince John began to talk about adjudging the prize to Bois-Guilbert, who had, with a single spear, overthrown two knights, and foiled a third.

But a new champion had entered the lists. His suit of armour was of steel, and the device on his shield was a young oak-tree pulled up by the roots, with the Spanish word *_Desdichado_*, signifying Disinherited. To the astonishment of all present he struck with the sharp end of his spear the shield of Brian de Bois-Guilbert until it rang again. Amazed at his presumption was the redoubted knight, whom he had thus defied to mortal combat.

"Have you confessed yourself, brother," said the Templar, "that you peril your life so frankly?"

"I am fitter to meet death than thou art," answered the Disinherited Knight.

"Then look your last upon the sun," said Bois-Guilbert; "for this night thou shalt sleep in paradise."

The champions closed in the centre of the lists with the shock of a thunderbolt. The Templar aimed at the centre of his antagonist's shield, and struck it so fair that his spear went to shivers, and the Disinherited Knight reeled in his saddle. On the other hand, that champion addressed his lance to his antagonist's helmet, and hit the Norman on the visor, where his lance's point kept hold of the bars. The girths of the Templar's saddle burst, and saddle, horse, and man rolled on the ground under a cloud of dust.

To extricate himself from the stirrups and fallen steed, was to the Templar scarce the work of a moment; and stung with madness, he drew his sword, and waved it in defiance of his conqueror. The Disinherited Knight sprung from his steed, and also unsheathed his sword. The marshals of the field, however, intervened, for the laws of the tournament did not permit this species of encounter, and Bois-Guilbert returned to his tent in an agony of rage and despair.

The Disinherited Knight then sounded a defiance to each of the challengers, and the four Normans each in his turn retired discomfited.

The acclamations of thousands applauded the unanimous award of the Prince and marshals, announcing that day's honours to the Disinherited Knight.

To Prince John's annoyance the champion declined either to raise his visor or to attend the evening banquet, pleading fatigue and the

necessity of preparing for the morrow. As victor it was his privilege to name the lady, who, as Queen of Honour and of Love, was to preside over the next day's festival; and Prince John, having placed upon his lance a coronet of green satin, the Disinherited Knight rode slowly around the lists and paused beneath the balcony where Cedric and the Lady Rowena were placed. Then he deposited the coronet at the feet of the fair Rowena, while the populace shouted "Long live the Lady Rowena, the chosen and lawful Queen of Love and of Beauty!"

On the following morning the general tournament was proclaimed, and about fifty knights were ready upon each side, the Disinherited Knight leading one body, and Brian de Bois-Guilbert the other.

Prince John escorted Rowena to the seat of honour opposite his own, while the fairest ladies present crowded after her to obtain places as near as possible to their temporary sovereign.

It was not until the field became thin by the numbers on either side who had yielded themselves vanquished that the Templar and the Disinherited Knight at length encountered hand to hand, with all the fury that mortal animosity and rivalry of honour could inspire. Bois-Guilbert, however, was soon joined by two more knights, the gigantic Front-de-Boeuf, and the ponderous Athelstane, who, though a Saxon, had enlisted under the Norman--to Cedric's disgust. The masterly horsemanship of the Disinherited Knight enabled him for a few minutes to keep at sword's point his three antagonists, but it was evident that he must at last be overpowered.

An unexpected incident changed the fortune of the day. Among the ranks of the Disinherited Knight was a champion in black armour, who bore on his shield no device of any kind, and who, beyond beating off with seeming ease those who attacked him, evinced little interest in the combat.

On discovering the leader of his party so hard beset, this knight threw aside his apathy and came to his assistance like a thunderbolt, exclaiming in trumpet tones, "_Desdichado_", to the rescue!" It was high time; for, while the Disinherited Knight was pressing upon the Templar, Front-de-Boeuf had got nigh to him with his uplifted sword; but ere the blow could descend, the Black Knight dealt a blow on the head--and Front-de-Boeuf rolled to the ground, both horse and man equally stunned. The Black Knight then turned upon Athelstane, wrenched from the hand of the bulky Saxon the battle-axe which he wielded, and bestowed him such a blow on the crest that Athelstane also lay senseless on the field. Having achieved this double feat he retired calmly to the extremity of the lists, leaving his leader to cope as best he could with Brian de Bois-Guilbert. This was no longer matter of so much difficulty. The Templar's horse had bled much, and gave way under the shock of the Disinherited Knight's charge. Brian de Bois-Guilbert rolled on the

field, and his antagonist, springing from horseback, waved his fatal sword over the Templar's head, and commanded him to yield. But Prince John saved him that mortification by putting an end to the conflict.

Thus ended the memorable field of Ashby-de-la-Zouche. The Knight of the Black Armour having disappeared, the Disinherited Knight was named the champion of the day, and was conducted to the foot of that throne of honour which was occupied by Lady Rowena. His helmet having been removed, by order of the marshals, the well-formed, yet sun-burnt features of a young man of twenty-five were seen, and no sooner had Rowena beheld him than she uttered a faint shriek. Trembling with the violence of sudden emotion, she placed upon the drooping head of the victor the splendid chaplet which was the destined reward of the day.

The Knight stooped his head, and then, sinking down, lay prostrate at the feet of his lovely sovereign.

There was general consternation. Cedric, struck mute by the sudden appearance of his banished son, now rushed forward. The marshals hastened to undo Ivanhoe's armour, and finding that the head of a lance had penetrated his breastplate and inflicted a wound in his side, he was quickly removed from the lists.

III.--The Burning of Torquilstone

Cedric, Rowena, and Athelstane, returning home with their retinue from Ashby, were waylaid by Bois-Guilbert and his followers, and boldly carried off as prisoners to Torquilstone, Front-de-Boeuf's castle. In those lawless times these Norman nobles trusted thus to obtain a good ransom for Cedric and Athelstane, and to win Rowena for a bride. Ivanhoe, who, enfeebled by his wound, lay concealed in a litter, unknown to his father, was also taken.

But Gurth rallied the Saxon outlaws and yeomen of the neighbourhood to the rescue, the Black Knight of the tournament led the attacking party, and in spite of a ferocious defence Torquilstone was stormed. The Black Knight bore the wounded Ivanhoe in his arms from the burning castle, Rowena was saved by Cedric and Gurth, just as she had abandoned all hopes of life.

One turret was now in bright flames, which flashed out furiously from window and shot hole. But, in other parts, the great thickness of the walls resisted the progress of the flames, and there the rage of man still triumphed. The besiegers pursued the defenders of the castle from chamber to chamber, and satiated in their blood the vengeance which animated them against the soldiers of the tyrant Front-de-Boeuf. Most of the garrison resisted to the uttermost--few of them asked quarter--none

received it.

The courtyard of the castle was soon the last scene of the contest. Here sat the fierce Templar mounted on horseback, with a remnant of the defenders, who fought with the utmost valour. Athelstane who, on the flight of the guard, had made his way into the ante-room and thence into the court, snatched a mace from the pavement, and rushed on the Templar's band striking in quick succession to the right and left: he was soon within two yards of Bois-Guilbert, whom he defied in his loudest tone.

But Athelstane was without armour, and a silken bonnet keeps out no steel blade. So trenchant was the Templar's weapon that it levelled the ill-fated Saxon to the earth.

Taking advantage of the dismay which was spread by the fall of Athelstane, and calling aloud, "Those who would save themselves, follow me!" the Templar pushed across the drawbridge, and then galloped off with his followers.

And now the towering flames surmounted every obstruction, and rose to the evening skies one huge and burning beacon. Tower after tower crashed down, with blazing roof and rafter, and the combatants were driven from the courtyard.

When the last turret gave way, the voice of Robin Hood was heard, "Shout, yeomen!--the den of tyrants is no more! Let each bring his spoil to our chosen place of rendezvous, and there at break of day will be made just partition among our own bands, together with our allies in this great deed of vengeance."

Cedric, ere he departed, earnestly entreated the Black Knight to accompany him to Rotherwood, "not as a guest, but as a son or brother."

"To Rotherwood will I come, brave Saxon," said the Knight, "and that speedily. Peradventure, when I come, I will ask such a boon as will put even thy generosity to the test."

"It is granted already," said Cedric, "were it to affect half my fortune. But my heart is oppressed with sadness, for the noble Athelstane is no more. I have but to say," he added, "that during the funeral rites I shall inhabit his castle of Coningsburgh--which will be open to all who choose to partake of the funeral banqueting."

Rowena waved a graceful adieu to the Black Knight, the Saxon bade God speed him, and on they moved through a wide glade of the forest.

IV.--Ivanhoe's Wedding

At the castle of Coningsburgh all was a scene of busy commotion when the Black Knight, attended by Ivanhoe, who had muffled his face in his mantle, entered and was welcomed gravely by Cedric--by common consent the chief of the distinguished Saxon families present.

"I crave to remind you, noble Thane," said the Knight, "that when we last parted, you promised, for the service I had the fortune to render you, to grant me a boon."

"It is granted ere named, noble Knight," said Cedric; "yet, at this sad moment----"

"Of that also," said the Knight, "I have bethought me--but my time is brief--neither does it seem to me unfit that, in the grave of the noble Athelstane, we should deposit certain prejudices and hasty opinions."

"Sir Knight," said Cedric, colouring, "in that which concerns the honour of my house, it is scarce fitting a stranger should mingle."

"Nor do I wish to mingle," said the Knight, mildly, "unless you will admit me to have an interest. As yet you have known me but as the Black Knight--know me now as Richard Plantagenet, King of England. And now to my boon. I require of thee, as a man of thy word, to forgive and receive to thy paternal affection the good Knight, Wilfred of Ivanhoe."

"My father!--my father!" said Ivanhoe, prostrating himself at Cedric's feet, "grant me thy forgiveness."

"Thou hast it, my son," said Cedric, raising him up. "The son of Hereward knows how to keep his word, even when it has been passed to a Norman. Thou art about to speak, and I guess the topic. The Lady Rowena must complete two years mourning as for a betrothed husband. The ghost of Athelstane himself would stand before us to forbid such dishonour to his memory were it otherwise."

Scarce had Cedric spoken than the door flew open, and Athelstane, arrayed in the garments of the grave, stood before them, pale, haggard, and like something arisen from the dead!

"In the name of God," said Cedric, starting back, "if thou art mortal, speak! Living or dead, noble Athelstane, speak to Cedric!"

"I will," said the spectre, very composedly, "when I have collected breath. Alive, saidst thou? I am as much alive as he can be who has fed on bread and water for three days. I went down under the Templar's sword, stunned, indeed, but unwounded, for the blade struck me flatlings, being averted by the good mace with which I warded the blow."

Others, of both sides, were beaten down and slaughtered above me, so that I never recovered my senses until I found myself in a coffin--an open one, by good luck--placed before the altar in church. But that villain Abbot has kept me a prisoner for three days and he shall hang on the top of this castle of Coningsburgh, in his cope and stole. I will be king in my own domains, and nowhere else. Cedric, I rise from the tomb a wiser man than I descended."

"My ward, Rowena," said Cedric--"you do not intend to desert her?"

"Father Cedric," said Athelstane, "be reasonable. The Lady Rowena cares not for me--she loves the little finger of my kinsman Wilfred's glove better than my whole person. There she stands to avouch it--nay, blush not, kinswoman, there is no shame in loving a courtly knight better than a country thane,--and do not laugh neither, Rowena, for grave-clothes and a thin visage are, God knows, no matter of merriment. Nay, as thou wilt needs laugh, I will find thee a better jest--Give me thy hand, or, rather, lend it me, for I but ask it in the way of friendship. Here, cousin Wilfred of Ivanhoe, in thy favour I renounce and abjure--Hey! our cousin Wilfred hath vanished!"

Ivanhoe had disappeared, and King Richard had gone also.

Ivanhoe hastened away at a secret message to fight once more with Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had abducted a Jewish maiden named Rebecca, and spurned by Rebecca, Bois-Guilbert only escaped condemnation by the Grand Master of the Templars for his offence by admitting Rebecca to be a sorceress, and by challenging to mortal combat all who should dare to champion the high-souled and hapless Hebrew maid.

Bois-Guilbert fell in the lists as Ivanhoe approached, and, unscathed by the lance of his enemy, died a victim to the violence of his own contending passions.

Ivanhoe and King Richard (who had followed Wilfred) hastened back to Coningsburgh, and Cedric, finding his project for the union of Rowena and Athelstane at an end by the mutual dissent of both parties, soon gave his consent to the marriage of his ward Rowena and his son Wilfred of Ivanhoe.

The nuptials thus formally approved were celebrated in the noble Minster of York. The King himself attended, and the presence of high-born Normans, as well as Saxons, joined with the universal rejoicing of the lower orders, marked the marriage as a pledge of the future peace and harmony betwixt the two races.

* * * * *

that as I was taken by her ladyship to wait upon her person, I should be quite destitute again, and forc'd to return to you and my poor mother, who have enough to do to maintain yourselves; and, as my lady's goodness had put me to write and cast accounts, and made me a little expert at my needle, and otherwise qualify'd above my degree, it was not every family that could have found a place that your poor Pamela was fit for. But God, whose graciousness to us we have so often experienc'd, put it into my good lady's heart, on her death-bed, just an hour before she expir'd, to recommend to my young master all her servants, one by one; and when it came to my turn to be recommended (for I was sobbing and crying at her pillow) she could only say, "My dear son!" and so broke off a little; and then recovering--"remember my poor Pamela!" and those were some of her last words! O, how my eyes overflow! Don't wonder to see the paper so blotted!

Well, but God's will must be done, and so comes the comfort, that I shall not be obliged to return back to be a burden to my dear parents! For my master said, "I will take care of you all, my good maidens; and for you, Pamela (and took me by the hand before them all), for my dear mother's sake I will be a friend to you, and you shall take care of my linen." God bless him! and pray with me, my dear father and mother, for a blessing upon him, for he has given mourning and a year's wages to all my lady's servants; and I, having no wages as yet, my lady having said she would do for me as I deserv'd, ordered the housekeeper to give me mourning with the rest, and gave me with his own hand four guineas and some silver, which were in my lady's pocket when she died; and said if I was a good girl, and faithful and diligent, he would be a friend to me, for his mother's sake. And so I send you these four guineas for your comfort. I send them by John, our footman, who goes your way; but he does not know what he carries; because I seal them up in one of the little pill-boxes which my lady had, wrapp'd close in paper, that they may not chink, and be sure don't open it before him.

Pray for your Pamela; who will ever be--

Your dutiful Daughter.

I have been scared out of my senses, for just now, as I was folding up this letter in my lady's dressing-room, in comes my young master! Good sirs, how I was frightened! I went to hide the letter in my bosom, and he, seeing me tremble, said smiling, "To whom have you been writing, Pamela?" I said, in my confusion, "Pray your honour, forgive me! Only to my father and mother." "Well, then, let me see what a hand you write." He took it without saying more, and read it quite through, and then gave it me again. He was not angry, for he took me by the hand and said, "You are a good girl to be kind to your aged father and mother; tho' you ought to be wary what tales you send out of a family." And then he said, "Why, Pamela, you write a pretty hand, and spell very well, too. You may look into any of my mother's books to improve yourself, so you take

care of them."

But I am making another long letter, so will only add to it, that I shall ever be your dutiful daughter.

PAMELA ANDREWS

II.--Twelve Months Later

MY DEAR MOTHER,--You and my good father may wonder you have not had a letter from me in so many weeks; but a sad, sad scene has been the occasion of it. But yet, don't be frightened, I am honest, and I hope God, in his goodness, will keep me so.

O this angel of a master! this fine gentleman! this gracious benefactor to your poor Pamela! who was to take care of me at the prayer of his good, dying mother! This very gentleman (yes, I must call him gentleman, though he has fallen from the merit of that title) has degraded himself to offer freedoms to his poor servant; he has now showed himself in his true colours, and, to me, nothing appears so black and so frightful.

I have not been idle; but had writ from time to time, how he, by sly, mean degrees, exposed his wicked views, but somebody stole my letter, and I know not what is become of it. I am watched very narrowly; and he says to Mrs. Jervis, the housekeeper, "This girl is always scribbling; I think she may be better employed." And yet I work very hard with my needle upon his linen and the fine linen of the family; and am, besides, about flowering him a waistcoat. But, oh, my heart's almost broken; for what am I likely to have for any reward but shame and disgrace, or else ill words and hard treatment!

As I can't find my letter, I'll try to recollect it all. All went well enough in the main, for some time. But one day he came to me as I was in the summer-house in the little garden at work with my needle, and Mrs. Jervis was just gone from me, and I would have gone out, but he said, "Don't go, Pamela, I have something to say to you, and you always fly me when I come near you, as if you were afraid of me."

I was much out of countenance you may well think, and began to tremble, and the more when he took me by the hand, for no soul was near us.

"You are a little fool," he said hastily, "and know not what's good for yourself. I tell you I will make a gentlewoman of you if you are obliging, and don't stand in your own light." And so saying, he put his arm about me and kiss'd me.

Now, you will say, all his wickedness appear'd plainly. I burst from him, and was getting out of the summer-house, but he held me back, and shut the door.

I would have given my life for a farthing. And he said, "I'll do you no harm, Pamela; don't be afraid of me."

I sobb'd and cry'd most sadly. "What a foolish hussy you are!" said he. "Have I done you any harm?" "Yes, sir," said I, "the greatest harm in the world; you have taught me to forget myself, and have lessen'd the distance that fortune has made between us, by demeaning yourself to be so free to a poor servant. I am honest, though poor; and if you were a prince I would not be otherwise than honest."

He was angry, and said, "Who, little fool, would have you otherwise? Cease your blubbering. I own I have undervalued myself; but it was only to try you. If you can keep this matter secret, you'll give me the better opinion of your prudence. And here's something," added he, putting some gold in my hand, "to make you amends for the fright I put you in. Go, take a walk in the garden, and don't go in till your blubbering is over."

"I won't take the money, indeed, sir," said I, and so I put it upon the bench. And as he seemed vexed and confounded at what he had done, I took the opportunity to hurry out of the summer-house.

He called to me, and said, "Be secret, I charge you, Pamela; and don't go in yet."

O how poor and mean must those actions be, and how little they must make the best of gentlemen look, when they put it into the power of their inferiors to be greater than they!

Pray for me, my dear father and mother; and don't be angry that I have not yet run away from this house, so late my comfort and delight, but now my terror and anguish. I am forc'd to break off hastily.

Your dutiful and honest DAUGHTER.

III.--Pamela in Distress

O my dearest Father and Mother,--Let me write and bewail my miserable fate, though I have no hope that what I write can be convey'd to your hands! I have now nothing to do but write and weep and fear and pray! But I will tell you what has befallen me, and some way, perhaps, may be opened to send the melancholy scribble to you. Alas, the unhappy Pamela may be undone before you can know her hard lot!

Last Thursday morning came, when I was to set out and return home to you, my dearest parents. I had taken my leave of my fellow-servants overnight, and a mournful leave it was to us all, for men, as well as women servants, wept to part with me; and for my part, I was overwhelmed with tears on the affecting instances of their love.

My master was above stairs, and never ask'd to see me. False heart, he knew that I was not to be out of his reach! Preserve me, heaven, from his power, and from his wickedness!

I look'd up when I got to the chariot, and I saw my master at the window, and I courtsy'd three times to him very low, and pray'd for him with my hands lifted up; for I could not speak. And he bow'd his head to me, which made me then very glad he would take such notice of me.

Robin drove so fast that I said to myself, at this rate of driving I shall soon be with my father and mother. But, alas! by nightfall he had driven me to a farmhouse far from home; and the farmer and his wife, he being a tenant of Mr. B., my master, while they treated me kindly, would do nothing to aid me in flight. And next day he drove me still further, and when we stopped at an inn in a town strange to me, the mistress of the inn was expecting me, and immediately called out for her sister, Jewkes. Jewkes! thought I. That is the name of the housekeeper at my master's house in Lincolnshire.

Then the wicked creature appear'd, and I was frighted out of my wits. The wretch would not trust me out of her sight, and soon I was forced to set out with her in the chariot. Now I gave over all thoughts of redemption.

Here are strange pains, thought I, taken to ruin a poor, innocent, helpless young female. This plot is laid too deep to be baffled, I fear.

About eight at night we enter'd the courtyard of this handsome, large, old, lonely mansion, that looked to me then as if built for solitude and mischief. And here, said I to myself, I fear, is to be the scene of my ruin, unless God protect me, Who is all-sufficient.

I was very ill at entering it, partly from fatigue, and partly from dejection of spirits. Mrs. Jewkes seem'd mighty officious to welcome me, and call'd me madam at every word.

"Pray, Mrs. Jewkes," said I, "don't madam me so! I am but a silly, poor girl, set up by the gambol of fortune for a May-game. Let us, therefore, talk upon afoot together, and that will be a favour done me. I am now no more than a poor desolate creature, and no better than a prisoner."

"Ay, ay," says she, "I understand something of the matter. You have so great power over my master that you will soon be mistress of us all; and so I will oblige you, if I can. And I must and will call you madam, for such are the instructions of my master, and you may depend upon it I shall observe my orders."

"You will not, I hope," replied I, "do an unlawful or wicked thing for any master in the world."

"Look ye!" said she. "He is my master, and if he bids me do a thing that I can do, I think I ought to do it; and let him, who has power to command me, look to the lawfulness of it."

"Suppose," said I, "he should resolve to ensnare a poor young creature and ruin her, would you assist him in such wickedness? And do you not think that to rob a person of her virtue is worse than cutting her throat?"

"Why, now," said she, "how strangely you talk! Are not the two sexes made for each other? And is it not natural for a man to love a pretty woman?" And then the wretch fell a-laughing, and talk'd most impertinently, and show'd me that I had nothing to expect either from her virtue or compassion.

I am now come to the twenty-seventh day of my imprisonment. One stratagem I have just thought of, though attended with this discouraging circumstance that I have neither friends, nor money, nor know one step of the way were I actually out of the house. But let bulls and bears and lions and tigers and, what is worse, false, treacherous, deceitful man stand in my way, I cannot be in more danger than I now think myself in.

Mrs. Jewkes has received a letter. She tells me, as a secret, that she has reason to think my master has found a way to satisfy my scruples. It is by marrying me to his dreadful Swiss servant, Colbrand, and buying me of him on the wedding-day for a sum of money! Was ever the like heard? She says it will be my duty to obey my husband, and that when my master has paid for me, and I am surrender'd up, the Swiss is to go home again, with the money, to his former wife and children; for, she says, it is the custom of these people to have a wife in every nation.

But this, to be sure, is horrid romancing!

Friday, the thirty-sixth day of imprisonment. Mercy on me! What will become of me? Here is my master come in his fine chariot! What shall I do? Where shall I hide myself?

He has entered and come up!

He put on a stern and a haughty air. "Well, perverse Pamela, ungrateful

creature, you do well, don't you, to give me all this trouble and vexation?"

I could not speak, but sobb'd and sigh'd, as if my heart would break. "Sir," I said, "permit me to return to my parents. That is all I have to ask."

He flew into a violent passion. "Is it thus," said he, "I am to be answered? Begone from my sight!"

The next day he sent me up by Mrs. Jewkes his proposals. They were seven in number, and included the promise of an estate of £250 a year in Kent, to be settled on my father; and a number of suits of rich clothing and diamond rings were to be mine if I would consent to be his mistress.

My answer was that my parents and their daughter would much rather choose to starve in a ditch or rot in a noisome dungeon, than accept of the fortune of a monarch upon such wicked terms.

Mrs. Jewkes now tells me he is exceedingly wroth, and that I must quit the house, and may go home to my father and mother.

Sunday night. Well, my dear parents, here I am at an inn in a little village. And Robin, the coachman, assures me he has orders to carry me to you. O, that he may say truth and not deceive me again!

"I have proofs," said my master to Mrs. Jewkes, when I left the house, "that her virtue is all her pride. Shall I rob her of that? No, let her go, perverse and foolish as she is; but she deserves to go away virtuous, and she shall."

I think I was loth to leave the house. Can you believe it? I felt something so strange and my heart was so heavy.

IV.--Virtue Triumphant--Pamela's Journal

Monday Morning, eleven o'clock. We are just come in here, to the inn kept by Mr. Jewkes's relations.

Just as I sat down, before setting out to pursue my journey, comes my master's groom, all in a foam, man and horse, with a letter for me, as follows:

"I find it in vain, my Pamela, to struggle against my affection for you, and as I flatter myself you may be brought to _love_ me, I begin to regret parting with you; but, God is my witness, from no dishonourable motives, but the very contrary.

"You cannot imagine the obligation your return will lay me under to your goodness, and if you are the generous Pamela I imagine you to be let me see by your compliance the further excellency of your disposition. Spare me, my dearest girl, the confusion of following you to your father's, which I must do if you go on--for I find I cannot live without you, and I must be--

"Yours, and only yours."

What, my dear parents, will you say to this letter? I am resolved to return to my master, and am sending this to you by Thomas the coachman.

It was one o'clock when we reach'd my master's gate. Everybody was gone to rest. But one of the helpers got the keys from Mrs. Jewkes, and open'd the gates. I was so tired when I went to get out of the chariot that I fell down, and two of the maids coming soon after helped me to get up stairs.

It seems my master was very ill, and had been upon the bed most of the day; but being in a fine sleep, he heard not the chariot come in.

Tuesday Morning. Mrs. Jewkes, as soon as she got up, went to know how my master did, and he had had a good night. She told him he must not be surprised--that Pamela was come back. He raised himself up.

"Can it be?" said he. "What, already? Ask her if she will be so good as to make me a visit. If she will not, I will rise and attend her."

Mrs. Jewkes came to tell me, and I went with her. As soon as he saw me, he said:

"Oh, my Pamela, you have made me quite well!"

How kind a dispensation is sickness sometimes! He was quite easy and pleased with me.

The next day my master was so much better that he would take a turn after breakfast in the chariot, handing me in before all the servants, as if I had been a lady. At first setting out, he kissed me a little too often, that he did; but he was exceedingly kind to me in his words as well.

At last, he said:

"My sister, Lady Davers, threatens to renounce me, and I shall incur the censures of the world if I act up to my present intentions. For it will be said by everyone that Mr. B. has been drawn in by the eye, to marry his mother's waiting maid. Not knowing, perhaps, that to her mind, to

her virtue, as well as to the beauties of her person, she owes her well-deserved conquest; and that there is not a lady in the kingdom who will better support the condition to which she will be raised if I should marry her." And added he, putting his arm round me: "I pity my dear girl, too, for her part in this censure, for here she will have to combat the pride and slights of the neighbouring gentry all around us. Lady Davers and the other ladies will not visit you; and you will, with a merit superior to them all, be treated as if unworthy their notice. Should I now marry my Pamela, how will my girl relish all this? Will not these be cutting things to my fair one?"

"Oh, sir," said I, "your poor servant has a much greater difficulty than this to overcome."

"What is that?" said he a little impatiently. "I will not forgive your doubts now."

"No, sir," said I, "I cannot doubt; but it is, how I shall _support_, how I shall _deserve, your_ goodness to me!"

"Dear girl!" said he, and press'd me to his bosom. "I was afraid you would again have given me reason to think you had doubts of my honour, and this at a time when I was pouring out my whole soul to you, I could not so easily have forgiven."

"But, good sir," said I, "my greatest concern will be for the rude jests you will have yourself to encounter for thus stooping beneath yourself. For as to _me_ I shall have the pride to place more than half the ill will of the ladies to their envying my happiness."

"You are very good, my dearest girl," said he. "But how will you bestow your _time_, when you will have no visits to receive or pay? No parties of pleasure to join in? No card-tables to employ your winter evenings?"

"In the first place, sir, if you will give me leave, I will myself look into all such parts of the family management as may befit the mistress of it to inspect. Then I will assist your housekeeper, as I used to do, in the making of jellies, sweetmeats, marmalades, cordials; and to pot and candy and preserve, for the use of the family; and to make myself all the fine linen of it. Then, sir, if you will indulge me with your company, I will take an airing in your chariot now and then; and I have no doubt of so behaving as to engage you frequently to fill up some part of my time in your instructive conversation."

"Proceed, my dear girl," said he. "I love to hear you talk !"

"Music, which my good lady also had me instructed in, will also fill up some intervals if I should have any. Then, sir, you know, I love reading and scribbling, and tho' most of the latter will be employed in the

family accounts, yet reading, in proper books, will be a pleasure to me, which I shall be unwilling to give up for the best company in the world when I cannot have yours."

"What delight do you give me, my beloved Pamela, in this sweet foretaste of my happiness! I will now defy the saucy, busy censures of the world."

Ten days later. Your happy, thrice happy Pamela, is at last married, my dearest parents.

This morning we entered the private chapel at this house, and my master took my hand and led me up to the altar. Mr. Peters, the good rector, gave me away, and the curate read the service. I trembled so, I could hardly stand.

And thus the dear, once haughty, assailer of Pamela's innocence, by a blessed turn of Providence, is become the kind, the generous protector and rewarder of it.

* * * * *



Thomas Peacock

Nightmare Abbey, by Thomas Peacock,
from Project Gutenberg's *The World's Greatest Books, Vol VII*, by Various

"Nightmare Abbey" is perhaps the most extravagant of all Peacock's stories, and, with the exception of "Headlong Hall," it obtained more vogue on its publication in 1818 than any of his other works. It is eminently characteristic of its author--the eighteenth century Rabelaisian pagan who prided himself on his antagonism towards religion, yet whose likes and dislikes were invariably inspired by hatred of cant and enthusiasm for progress. The hero of the story is easily distinguishable as the poet Shelley. On the whole the characters are more life-like presentations of humanity than

those of "Headlong Hall." Simple and weak though the plot is, the reader is carried along to the end through a brilliant maze of wit and satire; underneath which outward show of irresponsible fun there pervades a gloomy note of tragedy.

I.--Mr. Glowry and His Son

Nightmare Abbey, a venerable family mansion in a highly picturesque state of semi-dilapidation, in the county of, Lincoln, had the honour to be the seat of Christopher Glowry, Esquire, a gentleman much troubled with those phantoms of indigestion commonly called "blue devils."

Disappointed both in love and friendship, he had come to the conclusion that there was but one good thing in the world, videlicet, a good dinner; and remained a widower, with one only son and heir, Scythrop.

This son had been sent to a public-school, where a little learning was painfully beaten into him, and thence to the university, where it was carefully taken out of him, and he finished his education to the high satisfaction of the master and fellows of his college. He passed his vacations sometimes at Nightmare Abbey, and sometimes in London, at the house of his uncle, Mr. Hilary, a very cheerful and elastic gentleman. The company that frequented his house was the gayest of the gay. Scythrop danced with the ladies and drank with the gentlemen, and was pronounced by both a very accomplished, charming fellow.

Here he first saw the beautiful Miss Emily Girouette, and fell in love; he was favourably received, but the respective fathers quarrelled about the terms of the bargain, and the two lovers were torn asunder, weeping and vowing eternal constancy; and in three weeks the lady was led a smiling bride to the altar, leaving Scythrop half distracted. His father, to comfort him, read him a commentary on Ecclesiastes, of his own composition; it was thrown away upon Scythrop, who retired to his tower as dismal and disconsolate as before.

The tower which Scythrop inhabited stood at the south-eastern angle of the abbey; the south-western was ruinous and full of owls; the north-eastern contained the apartments of Mr. Glowry; the north-eastern tower was appropriated to the servants, whom Mr. Glowry always chose by one of two criterions--a long face or a dismal name. The main building was divided into room of state, spacious apartments for feasting, and numerous bedrooms for visitors, who, however, were few.

Occasional visits were paid by Mr. and Mrs. Hilary, but another visitor, much more to Mr. dowry's taste, was Mr. Flosky, a very lachrymose and morbid gentleman, of some note in the literary world, with a very fine sense of the grim and the tearful.

But the dearest friend of Mr. Glowry, and his most welcome guest, was Mr. Toobad, the Manichean Millenarian. The twelfth verse of the twelfth chapter of Revelations was always in his mouth: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come among you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time." He maintained that this precise time was the point of the plenitude of the power of the Evil Principle; he used to add that by and by he would be cast down, and a happy order of things succeed, but never omitted to add "Not in our time," which last words were always echoed by Mr. Glowry, in doleful response.

Shortly after Scythrop's disappointment Mr. Glowry was involved in a lawsuit, which compelled his attendance in London, and Scythrop was left alone, to wander about, with the "Sorrows of Werter" in his hand.

He now became troubled with the passion for reforming the world, and meditated on the practicability of reviving a confederacy of regenerators. He wrote and published a treatise in which his meanings were carefully wrapped up in the monk's hood of transcendental technology, but filled with hints of matters deep and dangerous, which he thought would set the whole nation in a ferment, and awaited the result in awful expectation; some months after he received a letter from his bookseller, informing him that only seven copies had been sold, and concluding with a polite request for the balance.

"Seven copies!" he thought. "Seven is a mystical number, and the omen is good. Let me find the seven purchasers, and they shall be the seven golden candlesticks with which I shall illuminate the world."

Scythrop had a certain portion of mechanical genius, and constructed models of cells and recesses, sliding panels and secret passages, which would have baffled the skill of the Parisian police. In his father's absence, he smuggled a dumb carpenter into his tower, and gave reality to one of these models. He foresaw that a great leader of regeneration would be involved in fearful dilemmas, and determined to adopt all possible precautions for his own preservation.

In the meantime, he drank Madeira and laid deep schemes for a thorough repair of the crazy fabric of human nature.

II.--Marionetta

Mr. Glowry returned with the loss of his lawsuit, and found Scythrop in a mood most sympathetically tragic. His friends, whom we have mentioned, availed themselves of his return to pay him a simultaneous visit, and at the same time arrived Scythrop's friend and fellow-collegian, the Hon.

Mr. Listless, a young gentleman devoured with a gloomy and misanthropical _nil curo_.

Mr. and Mrs. Hilary brought with them an orphan niece, Miss Marionetta Celestina O'Carroll, a blooming and accomplished young lady, who exhibited in her own character all the diversities of an April sky. Her hair was light brown, her eyes hazel, her features regular, and her person surpassingly graceful. She had some coquetry, and more caprice, liking and disliking almost in the same moment, and had not been three days in the abbey before she threw out all the lures of her beauty and accomplishments to make a prize of her cousin Scythrop's heart.

Scythrop's romantic dreams had given him many pure anticipated cognitions of combinations of beauty and intelligence, which, he had some misgivings, were not realised by Marionetta, but he soon became distractedly in love, which, when the lady perceived, she altered her tactics and assumed coldness and reserve. Scythrop was confounded, but, instead of falling at her feet begging explanation, he retreated to his tower, seated himself in the president's chair of his imaginary tribunal, summoned Marionetta with terrible formalities, frightened her out of her wits, disclosed himself, and clasped the beautiful penitent to his bosom.

While he was acting this reverie, his study door opened, and the real Marionetta appeared.

"For heaven's sake, Scythrop," said she, "what is the matter?"

"For heaven's sake, indeed!" said Scythrop, "for your sake, Marionetta, and you are my heaven! Distraction is the matter. I adore you, and your cruelty drives me mad!" He threw himself at her feet, and breathed a thousand vows in the most passionate language of romance.

With a very arch look, she said: "I prithee, deliver thyself like a man of the world." The levity of this quotation jarred so discordantly on the romantic inamorato that he sprang to his feet, and beat his forehead with his clenched fist. The young lady was terrified, and, taking his hand in hers, said in her tenderest tone: "What would you have, Scythrop?"

Scythrop was in heaven again.

"What but you, Marionetta! You, for the companion of my studies, the auxiliary of my great designs for mankind."

"I am afraid I should be but a poor auxiliary, Scythrop. What would you have me do?"

"Do as Rosalia does with Carlos, Marionetta. Let us each open a vein in

the other's arm, mix our blood in a bowl, and drink it as a sacrament of love; then we shall see visions of transcendental illumination."

Marionetta disengaged herself suddenly, and fled with precipitation. Scythrop pursued her, crying, "Stop, stop Marionetta--my life, my love!" and was gaining rapidly on her flight, when he came into sudden and violent contact with Mr. Toobad, and they both plunged together to the foot of the stairs, which gave the young lady time to escape and enclose herself in her chamber.

This was witnessed by Mr. Glowry, and he determined on a full explanation. He therefore entered Scythrop Tower, and at once said:

"So, sir, you are in love with your cousin."

Scythrop, with as little hesitation, answered, "Yes, sir."

"That is candid, at least. It is very provoking, very disappointing. I could not have supposed that you could have been infatuated with such a dancing, laughing, singing, careless, merry hearted thing as Marionetta--and with no fortune. Besides, sir, I have made a choice for you. Such a lovely, serious creature, in a fine state of high dissatisfaction with the world! Sir, I have pledged my honour to the contract, and now, sir, what is to be done?"

"Indeed, sir, I cannot say. I claim on this occasion that liberty of action which is the co-natal prerogative of every rational being."

"Liberty of action, sir! There is no such thing, and if you do not comply with my wishes, I shall be under the necessity of disinheriting you, though I shall do so with tears in my eyes."

He immediately sought Mrs. Hilary, and communicated his views to her. She straightway hinted to her niece, whom she loved as her own child, that dignity and decorum required them to leave the abbey at once. Marionetta listened in silent submission, but when Scythrop entered, and threw himself at her feet in a paroxysm of grief, she threw her arms round his neck, and burst into tears.

Scythrop snatched from its repository his ancestor's skull, filled it with Madeira, and presenting himself before Mr. Glowry, threatened to drink off the contents, if he did not promise that Marionetta should not leave the abbey without her own consent. Mr. Glowry, who took the Madeira to be some deadly brewage, gave his promise in dismal panic. Scythrop returned to Marionetta with a joyful heart, and drank the Maderia by the way, leaving his father much disturbed, for he had set his heart on marrying his son to the daughter of his friend, Mr. Toobad.

III.--Celinda

Mr. Toobad, too much accustomed to the intermeddling of the devil in all his affairs to be astonished at this new trace of his cloven claw, yet determined to outwit him, for he was sure there could be no comparison between his daughter and Marionetta in the mind of anyone who had a proper perception of the fact that seriousness and solemnity are the characteristics of wisdom. Therefore he set off to meet her in London, that he might lose no time in bringing her to Nightmare Abbey. After the first joy of meeting was over, he told his daughter he had a husband ready for her. The young lady replied very gravely she should take the liberty of choosing for herself.

"Have I not a fortune in my own right, sir?" said Celinda.

"The more is the pity," said Mr. Toobad. "But I can find means, miss--I can find means."

They parted for the night with the expression of opposite resolutions, and in the morning the young lady's chamber was empty, and what was become of her, Mr. Toobad had no clue to guess. He declared that when he should discover the fugitive, she should find "that the devil was come unto her, having great wrath," and continued to investigate town and country, visiting and revisiting Nightmare Abbey at intervals to consult Mr. Glowry.

Notwithstanding the difficulties that surrounded her, Marionetta could not debar herself from the pleasure of tormenting her lover, whom she kept in a continual fever, sometimes meeting him with unqualified affection, sometimes with chilling indifference, softening him to love by eloquent tenderness, or inflaming him to jealousy by coquetting with the Hon. Mr. Listless. Scythrop's schemes for regenerating the world and detecting his seven golden candlesticks went on very slowly.

On retiring to his tower one day Scythrop found it pre-occupied. A stranger, muffled to the eyes in a cloak, rose at his entrance, and looked at him intently for a few minutes in silence, then saying, "I see by your physiognomy you are to be trusted," dropped the cloak, and revealed to the astonished Scythrop a female form and countenance of dazzling grace and beauty, with long, flowing hair of raven blackness.

"You are a philosopher," said the lady, "and a lover of liberty. You are the author of a treatise called 'Philosophical Gas?'"

"I am," said Scythrop, delighted at this first blossom of his renown.

She then informed him that she was under the necessity of finding a refuge from an atrocious persecution, and had determined to apply to him

(on reading his pamphlet, and recognising a kindred mind) to find her a retreat where she could be concealed from the indefatigable search being made for her.

Doubtless, thought Scythrop, this is one of my seven golden candlesticks, and at once offered her the asylum of his secret apartments, assuring her she might rely on the honour of a transcendental eleutherarch.

"I rely on myself," said the lady. "I act as I please, and let the whole world say what it will. I am rich enough to set it at defiance. They alone are subject to blind authority who have no reliance on their own strength."

Stella took possession of the recondite apartments. Scythrop intended to find another asylum; but from day to day postponed his intention, and by degrees forgot it. The young lady reminded him from day to day, till she also forgot it.

Scythrop had now as much mystery about him as any romantic transcendentalist could desire. He had his esoterical and his exoterical love, and could not endure the thought of losing either of them. His father's suspicions were aroused by always finding the door locked on visiting Scythrop's study; and one day, hearing a female voice, and, on the door being opened, finding his son alone, he looked around and said:

"Where is the lady?"

Scythrop invited him to search the tower, but Mr. Glowry was not to be deceived. Scythrop talked loudly, hoping to drown his father's voice, in vain.

"I, say, sir, when you are so shortly to be married to your cousin Marionetta----"

The bookcase opened in the middle, and the beautiful Stella appeared, exclaiming:

"Married! Is he going to be married? The profligate!"

"Really, madam," said Mr. Glowry, "I do not know what he is going to do, or what anyone is going to do, for all this is incomprehensible."

"I can explain it all," said Scythrop, "if you will have the goodness to leave us alone."

Stella threw herself into a chair and burst into a passion of tears. Scythrop took her hand. She snatched it away, and turned her back upon him. Scythrop continued entreating Mr. Glowry to leave them alone, but

he was obstinate, and would not go.

A tap at the door, and Mr. Hilary entered. He stood a few minutes in silent surprise, then departed in search of Marionetta.

Scythrop was now in a hopeless predicament.

Mr. Hilary made a hue and cry, summoning his wife and Marionetta, and they hastened in consternation to Scythrop's apartments. Mr. Toobad saw them, and judging from their manner that the devil had manifested his wrath in some new shape, followed, and intercepted Stella's flight at the door by catching her in his arms.

"Celinda!" he exclaimed.

"Papa!" said the young lady disconsolately.

"The devil is come among you!" said Mr. Toobad. "How came my daughter here?"

Marionetta, who had fainted, opened her eyes and fixed them on Celinda. Celinda, in turn, fixed hers on Marionetta. Scythrop was equi-distant between them, like Mahomet's coffin.

"Celinda," said Mr. Toobad, "what does this mean? When I told you in London that I had chosen a husband for you, you thought proper to run away from him; and now, to all appearance, you have run away to him."

"How, sir? Was that your choice?"

"Precisely; and if he is yours, too, we shall both be of a mind, for the first time in our lives."

"He is not my choice, sir. This lady has a prior claim. I renounce him."

"And I renounce him!" said Marionetta.

Scythrop knew not what to do. He therefore retreated into his stronghold, mystery; maintained an impenetrable silence, and contented himself with deprecating glances at each of the objects of his idolatry.

The Hon. Mr. Listless, Mr. Flosky, and other guests had been attracted by the tumult, multitudinous questions, and answers en masse, composed a charivari, which was only terminated by Mrs. Hilary and Mr. Toobad retreating with the captive damsels. The whole party followed, leaving Scythrop carefully arranged in a pensive attitude.

IV.--Scythrop's Fate

He was still in this position when the butler entered to announce that dinner was on the table. He refused food, and on being told that the party was much reduced, everybody had gone, requested the butler to bring him a pint of port and a pistol. He would make his exit like Werter, but finally took Raven's advice--to dine first, and be miserable afterwards.

He was sipping his Madeira, immersed in melancholy musing, when his father entered and requested a rational solution of all this absurdity.

"I will leave it in writing for your satisfaction. The crisis of my fate is come. The world is a stage, and my direction is exit."

"Do not talk so, sir; do not talk so, Scythrop! What would you have?"

"I would have my love."

"And pray, sir, who is your love?"

"Celinda--Marionetta--either--both."

"Both! That may do very well in a German tragedy, but it will not do in Lincolnshire. Will you have Miss Toobad?"

"Yes."

"And renounce Marionetta?"

"No."

"But you must renounce one."

"I cannot."

"And you cannot have both. What is to be done?"

"I must shoot myself!"

"Don't talk so, Scythrop! Be rational, Scythrop! Consider, and make a cool, calm choice, and I will exert myself on your behalf."

"Well, sir, I will have--no, sir, I cannot renounce either. I cannot choose either, and I have no resource but a pistol."

"Scythrop--Scythrop, if one of them should come to you, what then? Have but a little patience, a week's patience, and it shall be."

"A week, sir, is an age; but to oblige you, as a last act of filial duty, I will live another week. It is now Thursday evening, twenty-five minutes past seven. At this hour next Thursday love and fate shall smile on me, or I will drink my last pint of port in this world."

Mr. Glowry ordered his travelling chariot, and departed from the abbey.

* * * * *

On the morning of the eventful Thursday, Scythrop ascended the turret with a telescope and spied anxiously along the road, till Raven summoned him to dinner at five, when he descended to his own funeral feast. He laid his pistol between his watch and his bottle. Scythrop rang the bell. Raven appeared.

"Raven," said he, "the clock is too fast."

"No, indeed," said Raven. "If anything it is too slow----"

"Villain," said Scythrop, pointing the pistol at him, "it is too fast!"

"Yes, yes--too fast, I meant!" said Raven, in fear.

"Put back my watch!" said Scythrop.

Raven, with trembling hand, was putting back the watch, when the rattle of wheels was heard; and Scythrop, springing down the stairs three steps together, was at the door in time to hand either of the young ladies from the carriage; but Mrs. Glowry was alone.

"I rejoice to see you!" said he. "I was fearful of being too late, for I waited till the last moment in the hope of accomplishing my promise; but all my endeavours have been vain, as these letters will show."

The first letter ended with the words: "I shall always cherish a grateful remembrance of Nightmare Abbey, for having been the means of introducing me to a true transcendentalist, and shall soon have the pleasure of subscribing myself

"CELINDA FLOSKY."

The other, from Marionetta, wished him much happiness with Miss Toobad, and finished with: "I shall always be happy to see you in Berkely Square, when, to the unalterable designation of your affectionate cousin, I shall subjoin the signature of

"MARIONETTA LISTLESS."

Scythrop tore both the letters to atoms, and railed in good, set terms

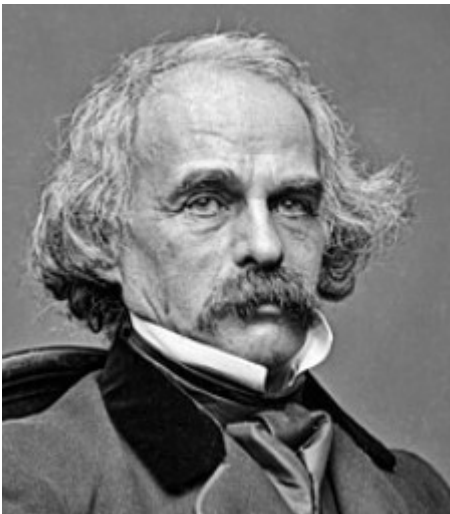
against the fickleness of women.

"Calm yourself, my dear Scythrop," said Mr. Glowry. "There are yet maidens in England; and besides, the fatal time is past, for it is now almost eight."

"Then that villain Raven deceived me when he said the clock was too fast; but I have just reflected these repeated crosses in love qualify me to take a very advanced degree in misanthropy. There is therefore, good hope that I may make a figure in the world."

Raven appeared. Scythrop looked at him very fiercely, and said, "Bring some Madeira!"

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Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1860's

The House of the Seven Gables, by Nathaniel Hawthorne
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"The House of the Seven Gables," published in 1851, was written by Nathaniel Hawthorne directly after "The Scarlet Letter;" and though not equal to that remarkable book, was full worthy of its author's reputation, and brought no disappointment to those who looked for great things from his pen. It seemed to James Russell Lowell "the highest art" to typify, "in the revived likeness of Judge Pyncheon to his ancestor the colonel, that intimate relationship between the present and the past in the way of ancestry and descent, which historians so carefully overlook." Here, as in "The Scarlet

Letter," Hawthorne is unsparing in his analysis of the meaning of early American Puritanism--its intolerance and its strength.

I.--The Old Pyncheon Family

Half-way down a by-street of one of our New England towns stands a rusty wooden house, with seven acutely-peaked gables, and a huge clustered chimney in the midst. The street is Pyncheon Street; the house is the old Pyncheon House; and an elm tree before the door is known as the Pyncheon elm.

Pyncheon Street formerly bore the humbler appellation of Maule's Lane, from the name of the original occupant of the soil, before whose cottage door it was a cow-path. In the growth of the town, however, after some thirty or forty years, the site covered by the rude hovel of Matthew Maule (originally remote from the centre of the earlier village) had become exceedingly desirable in the eyes of a prominent personage, who asserted claims to the land on the strength of a grant from the Legislature. Colonel Pyncheon, the claimant, was a man of iron energy of purpose. Matthew Maule, though an obscure man, was stubborn in the defense of what he considered his right. The dispute remained for years undecided, and came to a close only with the death of old Matthew Maule, who was executed for the crime of witchcraft.

It was remembered afterwards how loudly Colonel Pyncheon had joined in the general cry to purge the land from witchcraft, and had sought zealously the condemnation of Matthew Maule. At the moment of execution--with the halter about his neck, and while Colonel Pyncheon sat on horseback grimly gazing at the scene--Maule had addressed him from the scaffold, and uttered a prophecy. "God," said the dying man, pointing his finger at the countenance of his enemy, "God will give him blood to drink!"

When it was understood that Colonel Pyncheon intended to erect a spacious family mansion on the spot first covered by the log-built hut of Matthew Maule the village gossips shook their heads, and hinted that he was about to build his house over an unquiet grave.

But the Puritan soldier and magistrate was not a man to be turned aside from his scheme by dread of the reputed wizzard's ghost. He dug his cellar, and laid deep the foundations of his mansion; and the head-carpenter of the House of the Seven Gables was no other than Thomas Maule, the son of the dead man from whom the right to the soil had been wrested.

On the day the house was finished Colonel Pyncheon bade all the town to

be his guests, and Maude's Lane--or Pyncheon Street, as it was now called--was thronged at the appointed hour as with a congregation on its way to church.

But the founder of the stately mansion did not stand in his own hall to welcome the eminent persons who presented themselves in honour of the solemn festival, and the principal domestic had to explain that his master still remained in his study, which he had entered an hour before.

The lieutenant-governor took the matter into his hands, and knocked boldly at the door of the colonel's private apartment, and, getting no answer, he tried the door, which yielded to his hand, and was flung wide open by a sudden gust of wind.

The company thronged to the now open door, pressing the lieutenant-governor into the room before them.

A large map and a portrait of Colonel Pyncheon were conspicuous on the walls, and beneath the portrait sat the colonel himself in an elbow chair, with a pen in his hand.

A little boy, the colonel's grandchild, now made his way among the guests, and ran towards the seated figure; then, pausing halfway, he began to shriek with terror. The company drew nearer, and perceived that there was blood on the colonel's cuff and on his beard, and an unnatural distortion in his fixed stare. It was too late to render assistance. The iron-hearted Puritan, the relentless persecutor, the grasping and strong-willed man, was dead! Dead in his new house!

Colonel Pyncheon's sudden and mysterious end made a vast deal of noise in its day. There were many rumours, and a great dispute of doctors over the dead body. But the coroner's jury sat upon the corpse, and, like sensible men, returned an unassailable verdict of "Sudden Death."

The son and heir came into immediate enjoyment of a considerable estate, but a claim to a large tract of country in Waldo County, Maine, which the colonel, had he lived, would undoubtedly have made good, was lost by his decease. Some connecting link had slipped out of the evidence, and could not be found. Still, from generation to generation, the Pyncheons cherished an absurd delusion of family importance on the strength of this palpable claim; and from father to son they clung with tenacity to the ancestral house for the better part of two centuries.

The most noted event in the Pyncheon annals in the last fifty years had been the violent death of the chief member of the family--an old and wealthy bachelor. One of his nephews, Clifford, was found guilty of the murder, and was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. This had happened thirty years ago, and there were now rumours that the long-buried criminal was about to be released. Another nephew had become the heir,

and was now a judge in an inferior court. The only members of the family known to be extant, besides the judge and the thirty years' prisoner, were a sister of the latter, wretchedly poor, who lived in the House of the Seven Gables by the will of the old bachelor, and the judge's single surviving son, now travelling in Europe. The last and youngest Pyncheon was a little country girl of seventeen, whose father--another of the judge's cousins--was dead, and whose mother had taken another husband.

II.--The House without Sunshine

Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon was reduced to the business of setting up a pretty shop, and that in the Pyncheon house where she had spent all her days. After sixty years of idleness and seclusion, she must earn her bread or starve, and to keep shop was the only resource open to her.

The first customer to cross the threshold was a young man to whom old Hepzibah let certain remote rooms in the House of the Seven Gables. He explained that he had looked in to offer his best wishes, and to see if he could give any assistance.

Poor Hepzibah, when she heard the kindly tone of his voice, began to sob.

"Ah, Mr. Holgrave," she cried, "I never can go through with it! Never, never, never! I wish I were dead in the old family tomb with all my forefathers--yes, and with my brother, who had far better find me there than here! I am too old, too feeble, and too hopeless! If old Maule's ghost, or a descendant of his, could see me behind the counter to-day, he would call it the fulfilment of his worst wishes. But I thank you for your kindness, Mr. Holgrave, and will do my utmost to be a good shopkeeper."

On Holgrave asking for half a dozen biscuits, Hepzibah put them into his hand, but rejected the compensation.

"Let me be a lady a moment longer," she said, with a manner of antique stateliness. "A Pyncheon must not--at all events, under her forefathers' roof--receive money for a morsel of bread from her only friend."

As the day went on the poor lady blundered hopelessly with her customers, and committed the most unheard-of errors, so that the whole proceeds of her painful traffic amounted, at the close, to half a dozen coppers.

That night the little country cousin, Phoebe Pyncheon, arrived at the gloomy old house. Hepzibah knew that circumstances made it desirable for the girl to establish herself in another home, but she was reluctant to

bid her stay.

"Phoebe," she said, on the following morning, "this house of mine is but a melancholy place for a young person to be in. It lets in the wind and rain, and the snow, too, in the winter time; but it never lets in the sunshine! And as for myself, you see what I am--a dismal and lonesome old woman, whose temper is none of the best, and whose spirits are as bad as can be. I cannot make your life pleasant, Cousin Phoebe; neither can I so much as give you bread to eat."

"You will find me a cheerful little body," answered Phoebe, smiling, "and I mean to earn my bread. You know I have not been brought up a Pyncheon. A girl learns many things in a New England village."

"Ah, Phoebe," said Hepzibah, sighing, "it is a wretched thought that you should fling away your young days in a place like this. And, after all, it is not even for me to say who shall be a guest or inhabitant of the old Pyncheon house. Its master is coming."

"Do you mean Judge Pyncheon?" asked Phoebe, in surprise.

"Judge Pyncheon!" answered her cousin angrily. "He will hardly cross the threshold while I live. You shall see the face of him I speak of."

She went in quest of a miniature, and returned and placed it in Phoebe's hand.

"How do you like the face?" asked Hepzibah.

"It is handsome; it is very beautiful!" said Phoebe admiringly. "It is as sweet a face as a man's can be or ought to be. Who is it, Cousin Hepzibah?"

"Did you never hear of Clifford Pyncheon?"

"Never. I thought there were no Pyncheons left, except yourself and our Cousin Jaffrey, the judge. And yet I seem to have heard the name of Clifford Pyncheon. Yes, from my father, or my mother. But hasn't he been dead a long while?"

"Well, well, child, perhaps he has," said Hepzibah, with a sad, hollow laugh; "but in old houses like this, you know, dead people are very apt to come back again. And, Cousin Phoebe, if your courage does not fail you, we will not part soon. You are welcome to such a home as I can offer you."

III.--Miss Hepzibah's Guests

The day after Phoebe's arrival there was a constant tremor in Hepzibah's frame. With all her affection for a young cousin there was a recurring irritability.

"Bear with me, my dear child!" she cried; "bear with me, for I love you, Phoebe; and truly my heart is full to the brim! By-and-by I shall be kind, and only kind."

"What has happened?" asked Phoebe. "What is it that moves you so?"

"Hush! He is coming!" whispered Hepzibah. "Let him see you first, Phoebe; for you are young and rosy, and cannot help letting a smile break out. He always liked bright faces. And mine is old now, and the tears are hardly dry on it. Draw the curtain a little, but let there be a good deal of sunshine, too. He has had but little sunshine in his life, poor Clifford; and, oh, what a black shadow! Poor--poor Clifford!"

There was a step in the passage-way, above stairs. It seemed to Phoebe the same that she had heard in the night, as in a dream. Very slowly the steps came downstairs, and paused for a long time at the door.

Hepzibah, unable to endure the suspense, rushed forward, threw open the door, and led in the stranger by the hand. At the first glance Phoebe saw an elderly man, in an old-fashioned dressing gown, with grey hair, almost white, of an unusual length. The expression of his countenance seemed to waver, glimmer, and nearly to die away, and feebly to recover itself again.

"Dear Clifford," said Hepzibah, "this is our Cousin Phoebe, Arthur's only child, you know. She has come from the country to stay with us a while, for our old house has grown to be very lonely now."

"Phoebe? Arthur's child?" repeated the guest. "Ah, I forget! No matter. She is very welcome." He seated himself in the place assigned him, and looked strangely around. His eyes met Hepzibah's, and he seemed bewildered and disgusted. "Is this you, Hepzibah?" he murmured sadly. "How changed! how changed!"

"There is nothing but love here, Clifford," Hepzibah said softly--"nothing but love. You are at home."

The guest responded to her tone by a smile, which but half lit up his face. It was followed by a coarser expression, and he ate his food with fierce voracity and asked for "more--more!"

That day Phoebe attended to the shop, and the second person to enter it was a gentleman of portly figure and high respectability.

"I was not aware that Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon had commenced business under such favourable auspices," he said, in a deep voice, "You are her assistant, I suppose?"

"I certainly am," answered Phoebe. "I am a cousin of Miss Hepzibah, on a visit to her."

"Her cousin, and from the country?" said the gentleman, bowing and smiling. "In that case we must be better acquainted, for you are my own little kinswoman likewise. Let me see, you must be Phoebe, the only child of my dear Cousin Arthur. I am your kinsman, my dear. Surely you must have heard of Judge Pyncheon?"

Phoebe curtsied, and the judge bent forward to bestow a kiss on his young relative. But Phoebe drew back; there was something repulsive to her in the judge's demonstration, and on raising her eyes she was startled by the change in Judge Pyncheon's face. It had become cold, hard, and immitigable.

"Dear me! What is to be done now?" thought the country girl to herself. "He looks as if there were nothing softer in him than a rock, nor milder than the east wind."

Then all at once it struck Phoebe that this very Judge Pyncheon was the original of a miniature which Mr. Holgrave--who took portraits, and whose acquaintance she had made within a few hours of her arrival--had shown her yesterday. There was the same hard, stern, relentless look on the face. In reality, the miniature was copied from an old portrait of Colonel Pyncheon which hung within the house. Was it that the expression had been transmitted down as a precious heirloom, from that Puritan ancestor, in whose picture both the expression, and, to a singular degree, the features, of the modern judge were shown as by a kind of prophecy?

But as it happened, scarcely had Phoebe's eyes rested again on the judge's countenance than all its ugly sternness vanished, and she found herself almost overpowered by the warm benevolence of his look. But the fantasy would not quit her that the original Puritan, of whom she had heard so many sombre traditions, had now stepped into the shop.

"You seem to be a little nervous this morning," said the judge. "Has anything happened to disturb you--anything remarkable in Cousin Hepzibah's family--an arrival, eh? I thought so! To be an inmate with such a guest may well startle an innocent young girl!"

"You quite puzzle me, sir!" replied Phoebe. "There is no frightful guest in the house, but only a poor, gentle, child-like man, whom I believe to be Cousin Hepzibah's brother. I am afraid that he is not quite in his sound senses; but so mild he seems to be that a mother might trust her

baby with him. He startle me? Oh, no, indeed!"

"I rejoice to hear so favourable and so ingenious an account of my Cousin Clifford," said the benevolent judge. "It is possible that you have never heard of Clifford Pyncheon, and know nothing of his history. But is Clifford in the parlour? I will just step in and see him. There is no need to announce me. I know the house, and know my Cousin Hepzibah, and her brother Clifford likewise. Ah, there is Hepzibah herself!"

Such was the case. The vibrations of the judge's voice had reached the old gentlewoman in the parlour, where Clifford sat slumbering in his chair.

"He cannot see you," said Hepzibah, with quivering voice. "He cannot see visitors."

"A visitor--do you call me so?" cried the judge. "Then let me be Clifford's host, and your own likewise. Come at once to my house. I have often invited you before. Come, and we will labour together to make Clifford happy."

"Clifford has a home here," she answered.

"Woman," broke out the judge, "what is the meaning of all this? Have you other resources? Take care, Hepzibah, take care! Clifford is on the brink of as black a ruin as ever befel him yet!"

From within the parlour sounded a tremulous, wailing voice, indicating helpless alarm.

"Hepzibah!" cried the voice. "Entreat him not to come in. Go down on your knees to him. Oh, let him have mercy on me! Mercy!"

The judge withdrew, and Hepzibah, deathly white, staggered towards Phoebe.

"That man has been the horror of my life," she murmured. "Shall I never have courage enough to tell him what he is?"

IV.--The Spell is Broken

The shop thrived under Phoebe's management, and the acquaintance with Mr. Holgrave ripened into friendship.

Then, after some weeks, Phoebe went away on a temporary visit to her mother, and the old house, which had been brightened by her presence,

was once more dark and gloomy.

It was during this absence of Phoebe's that Judge Pyncheon once more called and demanded to see Clifford.

"You cannot see him," answered Hepzibah. "Clifford has kept his bed since yesterday."

"What! Clifford ill!" said the judge, starting. "Then I must, and will see him!"

The judge explained the reason for his urgency. He believed that Clifford could give the clue to the dead uncle's wealth, of which not more than a half had been mentioned in his will. If Clifford refused to reveal where the missing documents were placed, the judge declared he would have him confined in a public asylum as a lunatic, for there were many witnesses of Clifford's simple childlike ways.

"You are stronger than I," said Hepzibah, "and you have no pity in your strength. Clifford is not now insane; but the interview which you insist upon may go far to make him so. Nevertheless, I will call Clifford!"

Hepzibah went in search of her brother, and Judge Pyncheon flung himself down in an old chair in the parlour. He took his watch from his pocket and held it in his hand. But Clifford was not in his room, nor could Hepzibah find him. She returned to the parlour, calling out to the judge as she came, to rise and help find Clifford.

But the judge never moved, and Clifford appeared at the door, pointing his finger at the judge, and laughing with strange excitement.

"Hepzibah," he said, "we can dance now! We can sing, laugh, play, do what we will! The weight is gone, Hepzibah--gone off this weary old world, and we may be as lighthearted as little Phoebe herself! What an absurd figure the old fellow cuts now, just when he fancied he had me completely under his thumb!"

Then the brother and sister departed hastily from the house, and left Judge Pyncheon sitting in the old house of his forefathers.

Phoebe and Holgrave were in the house together when the brother and sister returned, and Holgrave had told her of the judge's sudden death. Then, in that hour so full of doubt and awe, the one miracle was wrought, without which every human existence is a blank, and the bliss which makes all things true, beautiful, and holy shone around this youth and maiden. They were conscious of nothing sad or old.

Presently the voices of Clifford and Hepzibah were heard at the door, and when they entered Clifford appeared the stronger of the two.

"It is our own little Phoebe! Ah! And Holgrave with her!" he exclaimed. "I thought of you both as we came down the street. And so the flower of Eden has bloomed even in this old, darksome house to-day."

A week after the judge's death news came of the death of his son, and so Hepzibah became rich, and so did Clifford, and so did Phoebe, and, through her, Holgrave.

It was far too late for the formal vindication of Clifford's character to be worth the trouble and anguish involved. For the truth was that the uncle had died by a sudden stroke, and the judge, knowing this, had let suspicion and condemnation fall on Clifford, only because he had himself been busy among the dead man's papers, destroying a later will made out in Clifford's favour, and because it was found the papers had been disturbed, to avert suspicion from the real offender he had let the blame fall on his cousin.

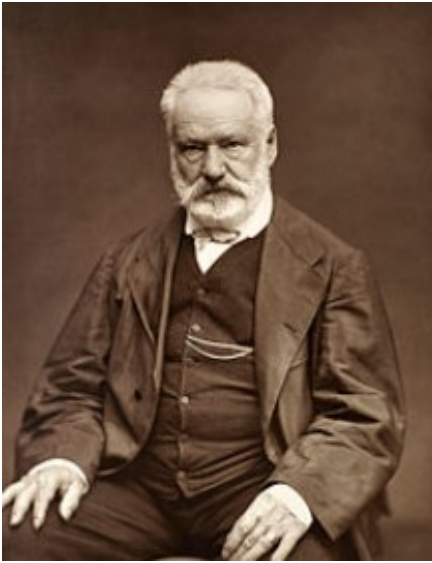
Clifford was content with the love of his sister and Phoebe and Holgrave. The good opinion of society was not worth publicly reclaiming.

It was Holgrave who discovered the missing document the judge had set his heart on obtaining.

"And now, my dearest Phoebe," said Holgrave, "how will it please you to assume the name of Maule? In this long drama of wrong and retribution I represent the old wizzard, and am probably as much of a wizzard as ever my ancestor was."

Then, with Hepzibah and Clifford, Phoebe and Holgrave left the old house for ever.

* * * * *



Victor Hugo, 1875

Les Misérables, by Victor Hugo

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Victor Marie Hugo, the great French poet, dramatist, and novelist, was born at Besançon, on February 26, 1802. He wrote verses from boyhood, and after minor successes, achieved reputation with "Odes et Poésies," 1823. Hugo early became the protagonist of the romantic movement in French literature. In 1841 he was elected to the Academy. From 1845 he took an increasingly active part in politics, with the result that from 1852 to 1870 he lived in exile, first in Jersey and then in Guernsey. "Les Misérables" is not only the greatest of all Victor Hugo's productions, but is in many respects the greatest work of fiction ever conceived. An enormous range of matter is pressed into its pages--by turn historical, philosophical, lyrical, humanitarian--but running through all the change of scene is the tragedy and comedy of life at its darkest and its brightest, and of human passions at their worst and at their best. It is more than a novel. It is a magnificent plea for the outcasts of society, for those who are crushed by the mighty edifice of social order. Yet throughout it all there is the insistent note of the final triumph of goodness in the heart of man. The story appeared in 1862, when Hugo was sixty years old, and was written during his exile in Guernsey. It was translated before publication into nine languages, and published simultaneously in eight of the principal cities of the world. Hugo died on May 22, 1885. (See also Vol. XVII.)

I.--Jean Valjean, Galley-Slave

Early in October 1815, at the close of the afternoon, a man came into the little town of D----. He was on foot, and the few people about looked at him suspiciously. The traveller was of wretched appearance, though stout and robust, and in the full vigour of life. He was evidently a stranger, and tired, dusty, and wearied with a long day's tramp.

But neither of the two inns in the town would give him food or shelter, though he offered good money for payment.

He was an ex-convict--that was enough to exclude him.

In despair he went to the prison, and asked humbly for a night's lodging, but the jailer told him that was impossible unless he got arrested first.

It was a cold night and the wind was blowing from the Alps; it seemed there was no refuge open to him.

Then, as he sat down on a stone bench in the marketplace and tried to sleep, a lady coming out of the cathedral noticed him, and, learning his homeless state, bade him knock at the bishop's house, for the good bishop's charity and compassion were known in all the neighbourhood.

At the man's knock the bishop, who lived alone with his sister, Madame Magloire, and an old housekeeper, said "Come in;" and the ex-convict entered.

He told them at once that his name was Jean Valjean, that he was a galley-slave, who had spent nineteen years at the hulks, and that he had been walking for four days since his release. "It is the same wherever I go," the man went on. "They all say to me, 'Be off!' I am very tired and hungry. Will you let me stay here? I will pay."

"Madame Magloire," said the bishop, "please lay another knife and fork. Sit down, monsieur, and warm yourself. We shall have supper directly, and your bed will be got ready while we are supping."

Joy and amazement were on the man's face; he stammered his thanks as though beside himself.

The bishop, in honour of his guest, had silver forks and spoons placed on the table.

The man took his food with frightful voracity, and paid no attention to anyone till the meal was over. Then the bishop showed him his bed in an alcove, and an hour later the whole household was asleep.

Jean Valjean soon woke up again.

For nineteen years he had been at the galleys. Originally a pruner of trees, he had broken a baker's window and stolen a loaf one hard winter when there was no work to be had, and for this the sentence was five years. Time after time he had tried to escape, and had always been recaptured; and for each offence a fresh sentence was imposed.

Nineteen years for breaking a window and stealing a loaf! He had gone into prison sobbing and shuddering. He came out full of hatred and bitterness.

That night, at the bishop's house, for the first time in nineteen years, Jean Valjean had received kindness. He was moved and shaken. It seemed inexplicable.

He got up from his bed. Everyone was asleep, the house was perfectly still.

Jean Valjean seized the silver plate-basket which stood in the bishop's room, put the silver into his knapsack, and fled out of the house.

In the morning, while the bishop was breakfasting, the gendarmes brought in Jean Valjean. The sergeant explained that they had met him running away, and had arrested him, because of the silver they found on him.

"I gave you the candlesticks, too!" said the bishop; "they are silver. Why did not you take them with the rest of the plate?" Then, turning to the gendarmes, "It is a mistake."

"We are to let him go?" said the sergeant.

"Certainly," said the bishop.

The gendarmes retired.

"My friend," said the bishop to Jean Valjean, "here are your candlesticks. Take them with you." He added in a low voice, "Never forget that you have promised me to use this silver to become an honest man. My brother, you belong no longer to evil, but to good."

Jean Valjean never remembered having promised anything. He left the bishop's house and the town dazed and stupefied. It was a new world he had come into.

He walked on for miles, and then sat down by the roadside to think.

Presently a small Savoyard boy passed him, and as he passed dropped a

two-franc piece on the ground.

Jean Valjean placed his foot upon it. In vain the boy prayed him for the coin. Jean Valjean sat motionless, deep in thought.

Only when the boy had gone on, in despair, did Jean Valjean wake from his reverie.

He shouted out, "Little Gervais, little Gervais!" for the boy had told him his name. The lad was out of sight and hearing, and no answer came.

The enormity of his crime came home to him, and Jean Valjean fell on the ground, and for the first time in nineteen years he wept.

II.--Father Madeleine

On a certain December night in 1815 a stranger entered the town of M---, at the very time when a great fire had just broken out in the town hall.

This man at once rushed into the flames, and at the risk of his own life saved the two children of the captain of gendarmes. In consequence of this act no one thought of asking for his passport.

The stranger settled in the town; by a happy invention he improved the manufacture of the black beads, the chief industry of M---, and in three years, from a very small capital, he became a rich man, and brought prosperity to the place.

In 1820, Father Madeleine, for so the stranger was called, was made Mayor of M--- by unanimous request, an honour he had declined the previous year. Before he came everything was languishing in the town, and now, a few years later, there was healthy life for all.

Father Madeleine employed everybody who came to him. The only condition he made was--honesty. From the men he expected good-will, from the women, purity.

Prosperity did not make Father Madeleine change his habits. He performed his duties as mayor, but lived a solitary and simple life, avoiding society. His strength, although he was a man of fifty, was enormous. It was noticed that he read more as his leisure increased, and that as the years went by his speech became gentler and more polite.

One person only in all the district looked doubtfully at the mayor, and that was Javert, inspector of police.

Javert, born in prison, was the incarnation of police duty--implacable, resolute, fanatical. He arrived in M---- when Father Madeleine was already a rich man, and he felt sure he had seen him before.

One day in 1823 the mayor interfered to prevent Javert sending a poor woman, named Fantine, to prison. Fantine had been dismissed from the factory without the knowledge of M. Madeleine; and her one hope in life was in her little girl, whom she called Cosette. Now, Cosette was boarded out at the village of Montfermeil, some leagues distance from M----, with a family grasping and dishonest, and to raise money for Cosette's keep had brought Fantine to misery and sickness.

The mayor could save Fantine from prison, he could not save her life; but before the unhappy woman died she had delivered a paper to Mr. Madeleine authorising him to take her child, and Mr. Madeleine had accepted the trust.

It was when Fantine lay dying in the hospital that Javert, who had quite decided in his own mind who M. Madeleine was, came to the mayor and asked to be dismissed from the service.

"I have denounced you, M. le Maire, to the prefect of police at Paris as Jean Valjean, an ex-convict, who has been wanted for the robbery of a little Savoyard more than five years ago."

"And what answer did you receive?"

"That I was mad, for the real Jean Valjean has been found."

"Ah!"

Javert explained that an old man had been arrested for breaking into an orchard; that on being taken to the prison he had been recognised by several people as Jean Valjean, and that he, Javert, himself recognised him. To-morrow he was to be tried at Arras, and, as he was an ex-convict, his sentence would be for life.

Terrible was the anguish of M. Madeleine that night. He had done all that man could do to obliterate the past, and now it seemed another was to be taken in his place. The torture and torment ended. In the morning M. Madeleine set out for Arras.

M. Madeleine arrived before the orchard-breaker was condemned. He proved to the court's astonishment that he, the revered and philanthropic Mayor of M----, was Jean Valjean, and that the prisoner had merely committed a trivial theft. Then he left the court, returned to M----, removed what money he had, buried it, and arranged his affairs.

A few days later Jean Valjean was sent back to the galleys at Toulon,

and with his removal the prosperity of M---- speedily collapsed. This was in July 1823. In November of that year the following paragraph appeared in the Toulon paper:

"Yesterday, a convict, on his return from rescuing a sailor, fell into the sea and was drowned. His body has not been found. His name was registered as Jean Valjean."

III.--A Hunted Man

At Christmas, in the year 1823, an old man came to the village of Montfermeil, called at the inn, paid money to the rascally innkeeper, Thénardier, and carried off little Cosette to Paris.

The old man rented a large garret in an old house, and Cosette became inexpressibly happy with her doll and with the good man who loved her so tenderly.

Till then Jean Valjean had never loved anything. He had never been a father, lover, husband, or friend. When he saw Cosette, and had rescued her, he felt his heart strangely moved. All the affection he had was aroused, and went out to this child. Jean Valjean was fifty-five and Cosette eight, and all the love of his life, hitherto untouched, melted into a benevolent devotion.

Cosette, too, changed. She had been separated from her mother at such an early age that she could not remember her. And the Thénardiens had treated her harshly. In Jean Valjean she found a father, just as he found a daughter in Cosette.

Weeks passed away. These two beings led a wonderfully happy life in the old garret; Cosette would chatter, laugh, and sing all day.

Jean Valjean was careful never to go out in the daytime, but he began to be known in the district as "the mendicant who gives away money." There was one old man who sat by some church steps, and who generally seemed to be praying, whom Jean Valjean always liked to relieve. One night when Jean Valjean had dropped a piece of money into his hand as usual, the beggar suddenly raised his eyes, stared hard at him, and then quickly dropped his head. Jean Valjean started, and went home greatly troubled. The face which he fancied he had seen was that of Javert.

A few nights later Jean Valjean found that Javert had taken lodgings in the same house where he and Cosette lived. Taking the child by the hand, he at once set out for fresh quarters. They passed through silent and empty streets, and crossed the river, and it seemed to Jean Valjean that no one was in pursuit. But soon he noticed four men plainly shadowing

him, and a shudder went over him. He turned from street to street, trying to escape from the city, and at last found himself entrapped in a _cul-de-sac._ What was to be done?

There was no time to turn back. Javert had undoubtedly picketed every outlet. Fortunately for Jean Valjean, there was a deep shadow in the street, so that his own movements were unseen.

While he stood hesitating, a patrol of soldiers entered the street, with Javert at their head. They frequently halted. It was evident that they were exploring every hole and corner, and one might judge they would take a quarter of an hour before they reached the spot where Jean Valjean was. It was a frightful moment. Capture meant the galleys, and Cosette lost for ever. There was only one thing possible--to scale the wall which ran along a wide portion of the street. But the difficulty was Cosette; there was no thought of abandoning her.

First, Jean Valjean procured a rope from the lamppost, for the lamps had not been lit that night owing to the moonlight. This he fastened round the child, taking the other end between his teeth. Half a minute later he was on his knees on the top of the wall. Cosette watched him in silence. All at once she heard Jean Valjean saying in a very low voice, "Lean against the wall. Don't speak, and don't be afraid."

She felt herself lifted from the ground, and before she had time to think where she was she found herself on the top of the wall.

Jean Valjean grasped her, put the child on his back, and crawled along the wall till he came to a sloping roof. He could hear the thundering voice of Javert giving orders to the patrol to search the _cul-de-sac_ to the end.

Jean Valjean slipped down the roof, still carrying Cosette, and leaped on the ground. It was a convent garden he had entered.

On the other side of the wall the clatter of muskets and the imprecations of Javert resounded; from the convent came a hymn.

Cosette and Jean Valjean fell on their knees. Presently Jean Valjean discovered that the gardener was an old man whose life he had saved at M-----, and who, in his gratitude, was prepared to do anything for M. Madeleine.

It ended in Cosette entering the convent school as a pupil, and Jean Valjean being accepted as the gardener's brother. The good nuns never left the precincts of their convent, and cared nothing for the world beyond their gates.

As for Javert, he had delayed attempting an arrest, even when his

suspensions had been aroused, because, after all, the papers said the convict was dead. But once convinced, he hesitated no longer.

His disappointment when Jean Valjean escaped him was midway between despair and fury. All night the search went on; but it never occurred to Javert that a steep wall of fourteen feet could be climbed by an old man with a child.

Several years passed at the convent.

Jean Valjean worked daily in the garden, and shared the hut and the name of the old gardener, M. Fauchelevent. Cosette was allowed to see him for an hour every day.

The peaceful garden, the fragrant flowers, the merry cries of the children, the grave and simple women, gradually brought happiness to Jean Valjean; and his heart melted into gratitude for the security he had found.

IV.--Something Higher than Duty

For six years Cosette and Jean Valjean stayed at the convent; and then, on the death of the old gardener, Jean Valjean, now bearing the name of Fauchelevent, decided that as Cosette was not going to be a nun, and as recognition was no longer to be feared, it would be well to remove into the city.

So a house was taken in the Rue Plumet, and here, with a faithful servant, the old man dwelt with his adopted child. But Jean Valjean took other rooms in Paris, in case of accidents.

Cosette was growing up. She was conscious of her good looks, and she was in love with a well-connected youth named Marius, the son of Baron Pontmercy.

Jean Valjean learnt of this secret love-making with dismay. The idea of parting from Cosette was intolerable to him.

Then, in June 1832, came desperate street fighting in Paris, and Marius was in command of one of the revolutionary barricades.

At this barricade Javert had been captured as a spy, and Jean Valjean, who was known to the revolutionaries, found his old, implacable enemy tied to a post, waiting to be shot. Jean Valjean requested to be allowed to blow out Javert's brains himself, and permission was given.

Holding a pistol in his hand, Jean Valjean led Javert, who was still

bound, to a lane out of sight of the barricade, and there with his knife cut the ropes from the wrists and feet of his prisoner.

"You are free," he said. "Go; and if by chance I leave this place alive, I am to be found under the name of Fauchelevent, in the Rue de l'Homme-Armé, No. 7."

Javert walked a few steps, and then turned back, and cried, "You worry me. I would rather you killed me!"

"Go!" was the only answer from Jean Valjean.

Javert moved slowly away; and when he had disappeared Jean Valjean discharged his pistol in the air.

Soon the last stand of the insurgents was at an end, and the barricade destroyed. Jean Valjean, who had taken no part in the struggle, beyond exposing himself to the bullets of the soldiers, was unhurt; but Marius lay wounded and insensible in his arms.

The soldiers were shooting down all who tried to escape. The situation was terrible.

There was only one chance for life--underground. An iron grating, which led to the sewers, was at his feet. Jean Valjean tore it open, and disappeared with Marius on his shoulders.

He emerged, after a horrible passage through a grating by the bank of the river, only to find there the implacable Javert!

Jean Valjean was quite calm.

"Inspector Javert," he said, "help me to carry this man home; then do with me what you please."

A cab was waiting for the inspector. He ordered the man to drive to the address Jean Valjean gave him. Marius, still unconscious, was taken to his grandfather's house.

"Inspector Javert," said Jean Valjean, "grant me one thing more. Let me go home for a minute; then you may take me where you will."

Javert told the driver to go to Rue de l'Homme-Armé, No. 7.

When they reached the house, Javert said, "Go up; I will wait here for you!"

But before Jean Valjean reached his rooms Javert had gone, and the street was empty.

Javert had not been at ease since his life had been spared. He was now in horrible uncertainty. To owe his life to an ex-convict, to accept this debt, and then to repay him by sending him back to the galleys was impossible. To let a malefactor go free while he, Inspector Javert, took his pay from the government, was equally impossible. It seemed there was something higher and above his code of duty, something he had not come into collision with before. The uncertainty of the right thing to be done destroyed Javert, to whom life had hitherto been perfectly plain. He could not live recognising Jean Valjean as his saviour, and he could not bring himself to arrest Jean Valjean.

Inspector Javert made his last report at the police-station, and then, unable to face the new conditions of life, walked slowly to the river and plunged into the Seine, where the water rolls round and round in an endless whirlpool.

Marius recovered, and married Cosette; and Jean Valjean lived alone. He had told Marius who he was--Jean Valjean, an escaped convict; and Marius and Cosette gradually saw less and less of the old man.

But before Jean Valjean died Marius learnt the whole truth of the heroic life of the old man who had rescued him from the lost barricade. For the first time he realised that Jean Valjean had come to the barricade only to save him, knowing him to be in love with Cosette.

He hastened with Cosette to Jean Valjean's room; but the old man's last hour had come.

"Come closer, come closer, both of you," he cried. "I love you so much. It is good to die like this! You love me too, my Cosette. I know you've always had a fondness for the poor old man. And you, M. Pontmercy, will always make Cosette happy. There were several things I wanted to say, but they don't matter now. Come nearer, my children. I am happy in dying!"

Cosette and Marius fell on their knees, and covered his hands with kisses.

Jean Valjean was dead!

* * * * *



George Eliot, 1860

Silas Marner, by George Eliot

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The World's Greatest Books, Vol IV*

"Silas Marner, the Weaver of Raveloe," begun about November, 1860, and published early in 1861, is in many respects the most admirable of all George Eliot's works. It is not a long story, but it is a most carefully finished novel--"a perfect gem, a pure work of art," Mr. Oscar Browning describes it. Mr. Blackwood, the publisher, found it rather sombre, and George Eliot replied to him, "I hope you will not find it at all a sad story as a whole, since it sets--or is intended to set--in a strong light the remedial influences of pure, natural, human relations. I have felt all through as if the story would have lent itself best to metrical rather than to prose fiction, especially in all that relates to the psychology of Silas; except that, under that treatment, there could not be an equal play of humour." No novel of George Eliot's has received more praise from men of letters than "Silas Marner."

I.--Why Silas Came to Raveloe

In the early years of the nineteenth century a linen-weaver named Silas Marner worked at his vocation in a stone cottage that stood among the nutty hedgerows near the village of Raveloe, and not far from the edge of a deserted stone-pit.

It was fifteen years since Silas Marner had first come to Raveloe; he was then simply a pallid young man with prominent, short-sighted brown eyes. To the villagers among whom he had come to settle he seemed to have mysterious peculiarities, chiefly owing to his advent from an unknown region called "North'ard." He invited no comer to step across his door-sill, and he never strolled into the village to drink a pint at

the Rainbow, or to gossip at the wheel-wrights'; he sought no man or woman, save for the purposes of his calling, or in order to supply himself with necessaries.

At the end of fifteen years the Raveloe men said just the same things about Silas Marner as at the beginning. There was only one important addition which the years had brought; it was that Master Marner had laid by a fine sight of money somewhere, and that he could buy up "bigger men than himself."

But while his daily habits presented scarcely any visible change, Marner's inward life had been a history and a metamorphosis as that of every fervid nature must be when it has been condemned to solitude. His life, before he came to Raveloe, had been filled with the close fellowship of a narrow religious sect, where the poorest layman had the chance of distinguishing himself by gifts of speech; and Marner was highly thought of in that little hidden world, known to itself as the church assembling in Lantern Yard. He was believed to be a young man of exemplary life and ardent faith, and a peculiar interest had been centred in him ever since he had fallen at a prayer-meeting into a trance or cataleptic fit, which lasted for an hour.

Among the members of his church there was one young man, named William Dane, with whom he lived in close friendship; and it seemed to the unsuspecting Silas that the friendship suffered no chill, even after he had formed a closer attachment, and had become engaged to a young servant-woman.

At this time the senior deacon was taken dangerously ill, and Silas and William, with others of the brethren, took turns at night-watching. On the night the old man died, Silas fell into one of his trances, and when he awoke at four o'clock in the morning death had come, and, further, a little bag of money had been stolen from the deacon's bureau, and Silas's pocket-knife was found inside the bureau. For some time Silas was mute with astonishment, then he said, "God will clear me; I know nothing about the knife being there, or the money being gone. Search me and my dwelling."

The search was made, and it ended in William Dane finding the deacon's bag, empty, tucked behind the chest of drawers in Silas's chamber.

According to the principles of the church in Lantern Yard prosecution was forbidden to Christians. But the members were bound to take other measures for finding out the truth, and they resolved on praying and drawing lots; there was nothing unusual about such proceedings a hundred years ago. Silas knelt with his brethren, relying on his own innocence being certified by immediate Divine interference. _The lots declared that Silas Marner was guilty_. He was solemnly suspended from church-membership, and called upon to render up the stolen money; only on

confession and repentance could he be received once more within the fold of the church. Marner listened in silence. At last, when everyone rose to depart, he went towards William Dane and said, in a voice shaken by agitation, "The last time I remember using my knife was when I took it out to cut a strap for you. I don't remember putting it in my pocket again. You stole the money, and you have woven a plot to lay the sin at my door. But you may prosper for all that; there is no just God, but a God of lies, that bears witness against the innocent!"

There was a general shudder at this blasphemy. Poor Marner went out with that despair in his soul--that shaken trust in God and man which is little short of madness to a loving nature. In the bitterness of his wounded spirit, he said to himself, "She will cast me off, too!" and for a whole day he sat alone, stunned by despair.

The second day he took refuge from benumbing unbelief by getting into his loom and working away as usual, and, before many hours were past, the minister and one of the deacons came to him with a message from Sarah, the young woman to whom he had been engaged, that she held her engagement at an end. In little more than a month from that time Sarah was married to William Dane, and not long afterwards it was known to the brethren in Lantern Yard that Silas Marner had departed from the town.

II.--The Second Blow

When Silas Marner first came to Raveloe he seemed to weave like a spider, from pure impulse, without reflection. Then there were the calls of hunger, and Silas, in his solitude, had to provide his own breakfast, dinner, and supper, to fetch his own water from the well, and put his own kettle on the fire; and all these immediate promptings helped to reduce his life to the unquestioning activity of a spinning insect. He hated the thought of the past; there was nothing that called out his love and fellowship towards the strangers he had come amongst; and the future was all dark, for there was no Unseen Love that cared for him.

It was then, when all purpose of life was gone, that Silas got into the habit of looking towards the money he received for his weaving, and grasping it with a sense of fulfilled effort. Gradually, the guineas, the crowns, and the half-crowns, grew to a heap, and Marner drew less and less for his own wants, trying to solve the problem of keeping himself strong enough to work sixteen hours a day on as small an outlay as possible. He handled his coins, he counted them, till their form and colour were like the satisfaction of a thirst to him; but it was only in the night, when his work was done, that he drew them out, to enjoy their companionship. He had taken up some bricks in his floor underneath his loom, and here he had made a hole in which he set the iron pot that contained his guineas and silver coins, covering the bricks with sand

whenever he replaced them.

So, year after year, Silas Marner lived in this solitude, his guineas rising in the iron pot, and his life narrowing and hardening itself more and more as it became reduced to the functions of weaving and hoarding.

This is the history of Silas Marner until the fifteenth year after he came to Raveloe. Then, about the Christmas of that year, a second great change came over his life.

It was a raw, foggy night, with rain, and Silas was returning from the village, plodding along, with a sack thrown round his shoulders, and with a horn lantern in his hand. His legs were weary, but his mind was at ease with the sense of security that springs from habit. Supper was his favourite meal, because it was his time of revelry, when his heart warmed over his gold.

He reached his door in much satisfaction that his errand was done; he opened it, and to his short-sighted eyes everything remained as he had left it, except that the fire sent out a welcome increase of heat.

As soon as he was warm he began to think it would be a long while to wait till after supper before he drew out his guineas, and it would be pleasant to see them on the table before him as he ate his food.

He rose and placed his candle unsuspectingly on the floor near his loom, swept away the sand, without noticing any change, and removed the bricks. The sight of the empty hole made his heart leap violently, but the belief that his gold was gone could not come at once--only terror, and the eager effort to put an end to the terror. He passed his trembling hand all about the hole, then he held the candle and examined it curiously, trembling more and more. He searched in every corner, he turned his bed over, and shook it, and kneaded it; he looked in his brick oven; and when there was no other place to be searched, he felt once more all round the hole.

He could see every object in his cottage, and his gold was not there. He put his trembling hands to his head, and gave a wild, ringing scream--the cry of desolation. Then the idea of a thief began to present itself, and he entertained it eagerly, because a thief might be caught and made to restore the gold. The robber must be laid hold of. Marner's ideas of legal authority were confused, but he felt that he must go and proclaim his loss; and the great people in the village--the clergyman, the constable, and Squire Cass--would make the thief deliver up the stolen money.

It was to the village inn Silas Marner went, where the parish clerk and a select company were assembled, and told the story of his loss--£272 12s. 6d. in all. The machinery of the law was set in motion, but no

thief was ever captured, nor could grounds be found for suspicion against any persons.

What had really happened was that Dunsey Cass, Squire Cass's second son--a mean, boastful rascal--on his way home on foot from hunting, saw the light in the weaver's cottage, and knocked, hoping to borrow a lantern, for the lane was unpleasantly slippery, and the night dark. But all was silence in the cottage, for the weaver at that moment had not yet reached home. For a minute Dunsey thought that old Marner might be dead, fallen over into the stone pits. And from that came the decision that he must be dead. If so, the question arose, what would become of the money that everybody said the old miser had put by?

Dunstan Cass was in difficulties for want of money, and he had killed his brother's horse that day on the hunting-field. Who would know, if Marner was dead, that anybody had come to take his hoard of money away?

There were only three hiding-places where he had heard of cottagers' hoards being found: the thatch, the bed, and a hole in the floor. His eyes travelling eagerly over the floor, noted a spot where the sand had been more carefully spread.

Dunstan found the hole and the money, now hidden in two leathern bags. From their weight he judged they must be filled with guineas. Quickly he hastened out into the darkness with the bags, and Dunstan Cass was seen no more alive.

At the very moment when he turned his back on the cottage Silas Marner was not more than a hundred yards away.

III.--Silas Marner's Visitor

It was New Year's Eve, and Squire Cass was giving a dance to the neighbouring gentry of Raveloe. There had been snow in the afternoon, but at seven o'clock it had ceased, and a freezing wind had sprung up.

A woman, shabbily dressed, with a child in her arms, was making her way towards Raveloe, seeking the Red House, where Squire Cass lived. It was not the squire she wanted, but his eldest son, Godfrey, to whom she was secretly married. The marriage--the result of rash impulse--had been an unhappy one from the first, for Godfrey's wife was the slave of opium. The squire had long desired that his son should marry Miss Nancy Lammeter, and would have turned him out of house and home had he known of the unfortunate marriage already contracted. Cold and weariness drove the woman, even while she walked, to the only comfort she knew. She raised the black remnant to her lips, and then flung the empty phial away. Now she walked, always more and more drowsily, and clutched more

and more automatically the sleeping child at her bosom. Soon she felt nothing but a supreme longing to lie down and sleep; and so sank down against a straggling furze-bush, an easy pillow enough; and the bed of snow, too, was soft. The cold was no longer felt, but her arms did not at once relax their instinctive clutch, and the little one slumbered on.

The complete torpor came at last; the fingers lost their tension, the arms unbent; then the little head fell away from the bosom, and the blue eyes of the child opened wide on the cold starlight. At first there was a little peevish cry of "Mammy," as the child rolled downward; and then, suddenly, its eyes were caught by a bright gleaming light on the white ground, and with the ready transition of infancy it decided the light must be caught.

In an instant the child had slipped on all fours, and, after making out that the cunning gleam came from a very bright place, the little one, rising on its legs, toddled through the snow--toddled on to the open door of Silas Marner's cottage, and right up to the warm hearth, where was a bright fire.

The little one, accustomed to be left to itself for long hours without notice, squatted down on the old sack spread out before the fire, in perfect contentment. Presently the little golden head sank down, and the blue eyes were veiled by their delicate half-transparent lids.

But where was Silas Marner while this strange visitor had come to his hearth? He was in the cottage, but he did not see the child. Since he had lost his money he had contracted the habit of opening his door, and looking out from time to time, as if he thought that his money might, somehow, be coming back to him.

That morning he had been told by some of his neighbours that it was New Year's Eve, and that he must sit up and hear the old year rung out, and the new rung in, because that was good luck, and might bring his money back again. Perhaps this friendly Raveloe way of jesting had helped to throw Silas into a more than usually excited state. Certainly he opened his door again and again that night, and the last time, just as he put out his hand to close it, the invisible wand of catalepsy arrested him, and there he stood like a graven image, powerless to resist either the good or evil that might enter.

When Marner's sensibility returned he was unaware of the break in his consciousness, and only noticed that he was chilled and faint.

Turning towards the hearth it seemed to his blurred vision as if there was a heap of gold on the floor; but instead of hard coin his fingers encountered soft, warm curls. In utter amazement, Silas fell on his knees to examine the marvel: it was a sleeping child, a round, fair thing, with soft, yellow rings all over its head. Could this be the

little sister come back to him in a dream--his little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before she died? That was the first thought. _Was_ it a dream? It was very much like his little sister. How and when had the child come in without his knowledge?

But there was a cry on the hearth; the child had awakened, and Marner stooped to lift it on to his knee. He had plenty to do through the next hour. The porridge, sweetened with some dry brown sugar, stopped the cries of the little one for "mammy." Then it occurred to Silas's dull bachelor mind that the child wanted its wet boots off, and this having been done, the wet boots suggested that the child had been walking on the snow.

He made out the marks of the little feet in the snow, and, holding the child in his arms, followed their track to the furze-bush. Then he became aware that there was something more than the bush before him--that there was a human body, half covered with the shifting snow.

With the child in his arms, Silas at once went for the doctor, who was spending the evening at the Red House. And Godfrey Cass recognised that it was his own child he saw in Marner's arms.

The woman was dead--had been dead for some hours, the doctor said; and Godfrey, who had accompanied him to Marner's cottage, understood that he was free to marry Nancy Lammeter.

"You'll take the child to the parish to-morrow?" Godfrey asked, speaking as indifferently as he could.

"Who says so?" said Marner sharply. "Will they make me take her? I shall keep her till anybody shows they've a right to take her away from me. The mother's dead, and I reckon it's got no father. It's a lone thing, and I'm a lone thing. My money's gone--I don't know where, and this is come from I don't know where."

Godfrey returned to the Red House with a sense of relief and gladness, and Silas kept the child. There had been a softening of feeling to him in the village since the day of his robbery, and now an active sympathy was aroused amongst the women. The child was christened Hephzibah, after Marner's mother, and was called Eppie for short.

IV--Eppie's Decision

Eppie had come to link Silas Marner once more with the whole world. The disposition to hoard had utterly gone, and there was no longer any repulsion around to him.

As the child grew up, one person watched with keener, though more hidden, interest than any other the prosperous growth of Eppie under the weaver's care. The squire was dead, and Godfrey Cass was married to Nancy Lammeter. He had no child of his own save the one that knew him not. No Dunsey had ever turned up, and people had ceased to think of him.

Sixteen years had passed, and now Aaron Winthrop, a well-behaved young gardener, is wanting to marry Eppie, and Eppie is willing to have him "some time."

"'Everybody's married some time,' Aaron says," said Eppie. "But I told him that wasn't true, for I said look at father--he's never been married."

"No, child," said Silas, "your father was a lone man till you was sent to him."

"But you'll never be lone again, father," said Eppie tenderly. "That was what Aaron said--'I could never think o' taking you away from Master Marner, Eppie.' And I said, 'It 'ud be no use if you did, Aaron.' And he wants us all to live together, so as you needn't work a bit, father, only what's for your own pleasure, and he'd be as good as a son to you--that was what he said."

The proposal to separate Eppie from her foster-father came from Godfrey Cass.

When the old stone-pit by Marner's cottage went dry, owing to drainage operations, the skeleton of Dunstan Cass was found, wedged between two great stones. The watch and seals were recognised, and all the weaver's money was at the bottom of the pit. The shock of this discovery moved Godfrey to tell Nancy the secret of his earlier marriage.

"Everything comes to light, Nancy, sooner or later," he said. "That woman Marner found dead in the snow--Eppie's mother--was my wife. Eppie is my child. I oughtn't to have left the child unowned. I oughtn't to have kept it from you."

"It's but little wrong to me, Godfrey," Nancy answered sadly. "You've made it up to me--you've been good to me for fifteen years. It'll be a different coming to us, now she's grown up."

They were childless, and it hadn't occurred to them as they approached Silas Marner's cottage that Godfrey's offer might be declined. At first Godfrey explained that he and his wife wanted to adopt Eppie in place of a daughter.

"Eppie, my child, speak," said old Marner faintly. "I won't stand in

your way. Thank Mr. and Mrs. Cass."

"Thank you, ma'am--thank you, sir," said Eppie dropping a curtsy; "but I can't leave my father, nor own anybody nearer than him."

Godfrey Cass was irritated at this obstacle.

"But I've a claim on you, Eppie," he returned. "It's my duty, Marner, to own Eppie as my child, and provide for her. She's my own child. Her mother was my wife. I've a natural claim on her."

"Then, sir, why didn't you say so sixteen years ago, and claim her before I'd come to love her, i'stead o' coming to take her from me now, when you might as well take the heart out o' my body? When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to them as take it in. But let it be as you will. Speak to the child. I'll hinder nothing."

"Eppie, my dear," said Godfrey, looking at his daughter not without some embarrassment, "it'll always be our wish that you should show your love and gratitude to one who's been a father to you so many years; but we hope you'll come to love us as well, and though I haven't been what a father should ha' been to you all these years, I wish to do the utmost in my power for you now, and provide for you as my only child. And you'll have the best of mothers in my wife."

Eppie did not come forward and curtsy as she had done before, but she held Silas's hand in hers and grasped it firmly.

"Thank you, ma'am--thank you, sir, for your offers--they're very great and far above my wish. For I should have no delight in life any more if I was forced to go away from my father."

In vain Nancy expostulated mildly.

"I can't feel as I've got any father but one," said Eppie. "I've always thought of a little home where he'd sit i' the corner, and I should fend and do everything for him. I can't think o' no other home. I wasn't brought up to be a lady, and," she ended passionately, "I'm promised to marry a working man, as'll live with father and help me to take care of him."

Godfrey Cass and his wife went out.

A year later Eppie was married, and Mrs. Godfrey Cass provided the wedding dress, and Mr. Cass made some necessary alterations to suit Silas's larger family.

"Oh, father," said Eppie, when the bridal party returned from the church, "what a pretty home ours is! I think nobody could be happier

than we are!"

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